The Rigveda

THE EARLIEST RELIGIOUS
POETRY OF INDIA

Translated by
Stephanie W. Jamison
and
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IX

Maṇḍala IX

The IXth Maṇḍala is the only major grouping in the Ṛgveda devoted to a single ritual procedure. It consists of 114 hymns dedicated to Soma Pavamāna, "self-purifying Soma." It treats the deified ritual substance, the exhilarating drink soma, whose preparation and offering are the focus of the most important Vedic ritual, the soma sacrifice, but it treats that substance at only a single episode in the whole elaborate sacrifice, the time when the soma juice, which has already been pressed, is poured across the sheep's fleece that serves to "purify" it—that is, to remove the vegetable detritus still present in the liquid—before it is first diluted with water, then mixed with milk, and poured into the offering vessels. (For more detailed treatment of the ritual procedures involved see, e.g., Geldner's introduction to this maṇḍala and Oberlies 1999.)

There are no other hymns to Soma Pavamāna in the Ṛgveda and only a few to Soma in his other aspects (I.91, VIII.48, VIII.79, X.25, as well as a few dedicated to Soma and another god [e.g., Soma and Rudra I.43, Agni and Soma I.93]). Judging from this absence, as well as from the data provided by the poets named by the Anukramaṇī, it is clear that many of the hymns in the maṇḍala were extracted from the original bardic collections and assembled in this liturgically oriented collection, while other hymns in the maṇḍala were composed by younger poets. The beginnings of the construction of a pan-Ārya sacrificial system, superseding the separate and competing clan rites—a construction that led to the middle Vedic śrauta ritual system—can be discerned in various composite hymns, especially IX.67.

It is little short of remarkable that the Ṛgvedic bards could take this ritual snapshot, consisting of what seems like extremely unpromising material, and make it into high poetry not once, but 114 times, and even the most devoted Vedicist approaches this maṇḍala with some trepidation and with fear of the ennui to be induced by endless repetition of a few ritual tropes. What is truly surprising is that the poets for the most part managed to create an extraordinary variety of approaches to this limited theme, and, for readers interested in how the traditional poets of antiquity used all their ingenuity and poetic resources to trick out and ring changes on an invariant topic, the IXth Maṇḍala serves as a sort of laboratory to observe these skills in action. The hymns in the latter part of the

maṇḍala in trimeter meter especially display this richness of approach, but even the sixty-seven hymns in the short (24 syllables per verse) gāyatrī meter are very different from each other.

One of the ways in which the poets imbue this ritual moment with gravity beyond the simple facts of the procedure is by animatizing all the elements deployed in the procedure and making them *actors*, rather than inert things acted upon. The soma juice is configured as Soma, king and god, making a royal progress across the filter to his rendezvous with the gods. Or he is a powerful charging bull, or a swift racehorse, or a bird in flight. The fleece filter is a ewe; the milk is regularly conceived of as a herd of cows, eager to mate with the bull Soma. These ritual elements are also given cosmic dimensions. Soma is a pillar between heaven and earth; the sheep's fleece is the whole surface of the earth or of heaven; the waters for dilution are a vast sea into which the waves of soma empty themselves; the milk in its gleaming brightness is the sun or the day-lit sky. Once they have assumed these other poetic identities, the elements of the ritual then participate in still other metaphors and images that stretch those identities further. And the identities shift constantly within even brief hymns. In short, although it may be difficult to love the Soma Maṇḍala, it provides an almost ideal lesson in how to construct traditional poetry. However, in order to appreciate the artistry and the distance between the real subject and its ennobling verbal treatment, it is necessary to keep the physical facts of the ritual always in view; we have emphasized these regularly in the introductions to the individual hymns. For a close study of the imagery, form, and composition of the soma hymns, see Oberlies (1999).

The maṇḍala is organized by meter, with the majority of the hymns in the dimeter gāyatrī meter (IX.1–67), followed by smaller collections of trimeter—jagatī (68–86) and triṣṭubh (87–97)—then anuṣṭubh (98–101), uṣṇih (102–106), pragātha structures (107–108), ending with miscellaneous meters (109–114). Within each metrical group the hymns are arranged by length, from longest to shortest. Although the gāyatrī, jagatī, and triṣṭubh collections end with some very long hymns, these "hymns" can easily be deconstructed into smaller hymns containing the correct number of verses. For example, the jagatī group ends with two apparently nonconforming hymns. After a long series of five-verse hymns (IX.75–84) we find IX.85 at twelve verses and IX.86 at forty-eight. But IX.85 can be broken down into three four-verse hymns and IX.86 into sixteen tṛcas (three-verse groupings). The longest hymn in the Ṛgveda is the final hymn of the triṣṭubh group, IX.97 with fifty-eight verses, divisible into tṛcas (with a final, extra verse).

Gāyatrī Hymns: 1–67

IX.1 (713) Soma Pavamāna

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

The poet to whom the Anukramaṇī ascribes this hymn has the same name as the poet of the first collection of hymns in the Ṛgveda: Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra is the author named for I.1–11 (and a descendant, Jetar Mādhuchandasa, for I.12). It is possible that in the absence of a known author the Anukramaṇī simply borrowed the name for this first hymn; in fact, the first four hymns of the IXth Maṇḍala are attributed to the first four authors of Maṇḍala I. On the other hand, the Soma Pavamāna hymns of the first four poets of Maṇḍala I may have been selected to begin the Soma Maṇḍala in order to provide an ordered framework.

The command "purify yourself" (*pávasva*) is the first word of the second pāda of this hymn and sets the theme for the entire maṇḍala: "self-purifying" soma. This first verse also introduces the necessary complement to this self-purifying soma, namely the consumer of soma par excellence, Indra. Thus the verse encapsulates in its simplicity the endlessly repeated and often monotonous concerns of the maṇḍala. The second verse alludes to the technical details of soma's preparation, another topic that will preoccupy the hymns to follow. Soma's powers to benefit men and gods directly are the subject of verses 3–5, while his power to stimulate Indra to do the same, an indirect benefit for both populations, closes the hymn (vs. 10).

Verses 6–9 contain more idiosyncratic material, a catalogue of female beings who aid in the preparation of soma. True, both the fingers that perform the pressing, metaphorically described in verses 7–8, and the cows that provide the milk to mix with soma (vs. 9) are common denizens of soma hymns, but the Daughter of the Sun is not: she otherwise appears in the IXth Maṇḍala only almost at the end, in IX.113.3. It is unclear what her role is here; perhaps she signals the Morning Pressing. Moreover, the "skin pipe" blown by the maidens in verse 8 is somewhat puzzling; on the basis of other passages (I.117.21 and VII.89.2) it appears to be a musical instrument, but how this image is meant to apply to soma (perhaps the stalk?) and how the fingers can also "blow" is not clear.

In short, most of this hymn is familiar, not to say clichéd, material in soma hymns, but as usual there are small deviations and striking images that challenge our notion that the soma hymns, particularly those in gāyatrī meter, are an undifferentiated mass of repetitive phrases.

1. Purify yourself in the sweetest, most exhilarating stream, Soma,
   when you are pressed for Indra to drink.
2. Demon-smasher, common to all domains, he has reached his seat upon
   the metal-hammered womb,
   upon his sitting place, by means of the wooden (vessel).
3. Become the best establisher of the wide realm, most munificent, best
   smasher of obstacles.
   Deliver (to us) the bounty of the liberal ones.

4. Rush to the pursuit of the great gods with your stalk,
to the prize of victory and to fame.
5. Toward you do we proceed; this is just our goal every day.
O drop, in you are our hopes.
6. The Daughter of the Sun purifies your circling soma
with the fleece-filter in unfailing measure.
7. Him do the delicate ones grasp at the clash—the ten maidens [=fingers],
the sisters—on the decisive day.
8. Him do the unwed girls impel, as they blow the skin bagpipe,
him, the threefold wild honey.
9. And him do the inviolable milk-cows prepare, as their child,
the soma, for Indra to drink.
10. In the raptures of just this (soma) Indra the champion keeps smashing
all obstacles
and bestows bounties.

IX.2 (714) Soma Pavamāna

Medhātithi Kāṇva
10 verses: gāyatrī

Medhātithi Kāṇva is the named poet of several hymns in the first half of Maṇḍala VIII (2–3, 32), with its predominantly Kāṇva authorship—but more to the point also of the second division of Maṇḍala I (I.12–23). So, just as the first hymn of IX is ascribed to the poet of the first hymns of Maṇḍala I, the second hymn of IX is said to have been composed by the poet of the second collection in I.

The hymn begins with the signature command "purify yourself" (*pávasva*), and the first word of the second pāda belongs to the same root: *pavítram*, the "means of purifying," that is, the filter. The first verses in general follow the steps in the preparation of soma after the pressing proper: the filtering of the pressed soma (vs. 1), into a vessel (vs. 2) with water (vss. 3–4), followed by the mixing with milk (vs. 4). This process is summarized in grandiose and cosmic terms in the following two verses (5–6), with the verbal accompaniment, the hymns and prayers, introduced in verses 7–8. Verse 9 echoes the earlier part of the hymn, particularly verse 3, and the poet ends (vs. 10) with a description of all of Soma's winnings, which can be interpreted as a covert request for Soma to provide us with these items.

There is nothing particularly noteworthy or out of the ordinary in this hymn, which could be taken as a prototypical Soma hymn.

1. Purify yourself across the filter at speed, Soma, pursuing the gods.
As a bull, enter Indra, o drop.
2. Coil yourself toward great enjoyment, o drop, as the most
heaven-bright bull.
Sit steadfast on your womb.
3. The stream of the pressed one, of the ritual adept, has milked out its
own dear honey.
Very resolute, he has clothed himself in the waters.
4. The great waters, the rivers, rush after you, the great one,
when you will clothe yourself with the cows.
5. The sea has been groomed in the waters—the prop and buttress of heaven,
the soma in the filter, seeking us.
6. The tawny bull has bellowed; the great one, lovely to see like an ally,
shines along with the sun.
7. O drop, the industrious songs are constantly groomed by your power,
the songs by which you are (in turn) beautified for exhilaration.
8. We implore you, who make wide space, for ardent exhilaration.
To you belong great praise songs.
9. For us, o drop, while seeking Indra, purify yourself in a stream
of honey,
like rain-bearing Parjanya.
10. O drop, you are cow-winning, man-winning, horse-winning, and
prize-winning.
You are the ancient embodiment of the sacrifice.

IX.3 (715) Soma Pavamāna

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
10 verses: gāyatrī

Following the pattern set by IX.1–2, the Anukramaṇī gives as the poet of this hymn the author of the third collection of hymns in Maṇḍala I (24–30), Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti, also the protagonist of the famous Aitareya Brāhmaṇa story of father/son sacrifice (AiB VII.13–18), related during the Rājasūya, the Royal Consecration.

The hymn is verbally unified by the "this (one)" (*eṣá*), which begins every verse. It is thematically unified by its focus on only one step of the preparation, the filtering through sheep's wool that is the self-purification proper. A form of the verb "purify oneself" appears in seven of the ten verses (and "filter" derived from the same root in an eighth; only vss. 1 and 6 lack such a form). The poet provides variety with a range of images, from the bird of verse 1 to the chariot rider in verse 5, and as is common he conflates, and equates, the ritual and cosmic spheres. So, for example, the filter across which the soma moves is both a tangle of wool (vs. 2) and the vast spaces of heaven and the atmosphere (vs. 7).

1. This god, the immortal, flies like a bird on the wing
toward the wooden cups to take his seat.

2. This god, created by poetic inspiration, streaks across the tangles (of sheep's wool)
purifying himself, impossible to deceive.
3. This god, the tawny one, purifying himself,
is groomed for the prize by the admiring (poets) who pursue the truth.
4. This one, like a champion traveling with his warriors,
strives to win all desirable things, while he purifies himself.
5. This god rides on a chariot; while he purifies himself, he shows his favor and makes manifest his noise.
6. This one, praised by the inspired poets, the god, plunges through the waters,
establishing treasures for the pious man.
7. This one streaks through heaven, across the airy spaces in his stream,
whinnying again and again as he purifies himself.
8. This one has now run through heaven, across the airy spaces, and cannot be recaptured—
good at the rite as he purifies himself.
9. This one, pressed in the way of his ancient birth, the god pressed for gods,
the tawny one, rushes into the filter.
10. And this one here, he of much authority, giving birth to refreshing drinks while he is being born,
purifies himself in a stream when he is pressed.

IX.4 (716) Soma Pavamāna

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
10 verses: gāyatrī

Once again, the poet of this fourth hymn in the Soma Maṇḍala is also the author of the fourth collection of hymns in Maṇḍala I (I.31–35), as well as another Soma hymn, IX.69.

The thematic constriction of the soma hymns is even narrower than usual in this hymn. A third of each verse is occupied by the self-contained refrain (pāda c: *áthā no vásyasas kṛdhi* "then make us better off"), and many of the verses consist of short imperative clauses. There are local repetitions as well: the initial "win!" (*sánā*) of verses 1–3, the repeated pāda about resolve and help in verses 5b–6a, and the initial "rush" (*abhy àrṣa*) of verses 7–8. Only two verses (6, 9) lack an imperative, and the former contains an optative in similar usage.

These conscious formal limits of the hymn are obviously its point: content is secondary. One might note, however, that the sun's light is especially desired (vss. 2, 5, 6).

1. Win, Soma, and conquer great fame, self-purifying one.
– Then make us better off.
2. Win light, win the sun, and all the gifts of good fortune, Soma.
– Then make us better off.
3. Win skill and resolve. Soma, strike away the scorners.
– Then make us better off.
4. Purifiers, purify soma for Indra to drink.
– Then make us better off.
5. Give us a share in the sun through your resolve and your help.
– Then make us better off.
6. Through your resolve and your help might we see the sun for a long time.
– Then make us better off.
7. Rush, well-armed Soma, toward double-lofty wealth.
– Then make us better off.
8. Rush toward wealth, as the unbudgeable victor in battles.
– Then make us better off.
9. They have increased you with sacrifices at your expansion, self-purifying one.
– Then make us better off.
10. Bring us glittering wealth in horses, o drop, through our whole lifetime.
– Then make us better off.

The pattern of matches between the order of poets in the Maṇḍala I and that of IX is broken by IX.5. The next twenty hymns (IX.5–24) are attributed to Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa, poets not otherwise found in the Anukramaṇī list of Ṛgvedic poets, though there are other poets with the patronymic Kāśyapa, as well as Kaśyapa Mārīca, to whom a number of hymns, including several in IX, are attributed.

IX.5 (717) Āprī

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
11 verses: gāyatrī 1–7, anuṣṭubh 8–11

An interesting hybrid: the poet has taken the strict patterning of the Āprī hymns of the animal sacrifice, in which each verse contains a key word or phrase (italicized in translation) and the verses appear in the same order, and adapted it to the Soma Pavamāna genre. The same key words are found in the same order, but they are no longer directly addressed to or descriptive of a series of different divinities and divinized ritual elements. Instead Soma is sometimes identified with the divinity

of the original Āprī verse (vss. 2, 7), or characterized by the epithet used for that divinity (vss. 1, 3), or, most often, he manipulates the divinized element (vss. 4, 5, 10) or associates with the Āprī divinity at the sacrifice (vss. 6, 8, 9, 11). Each verse contains a form of *pávamāna* "self-purifying" to anchor the Āprī structure to the soma context.

1. *Enkindled*, the self-purifying lord shines forth in every direction,
   giving pleasure, the ever-roaring bull.
2. As *Tanūnapāt*, the self-purifying one, sharpening his horns, rushes
   through the midspace, ever-shining.
3. *Worthy to be invoked*, the self-purifying one, heaven-bright wealth,
   shines forth
   with his streams of honey, with his strength.
4. The tawny self-purifying one, strewing the *ritual grass* toward the east
   with his strength,
   speeds as a god to the gods.
5. With their frames the golden *Divine Doors* open up aloft,
   well praised by the self-purifying one.
6. The self-purifying one acts the bull to the two handsomely adorned
   females, lofty and great,
   Night and Dawn, like two (women) lovely to see.
7. Both gods who have the gaze of men, the two *Divine Hotars*, do
   I summon—
   the self-purifying one and Indra the bull.
8. *Bhāratī, Sarasvatī*, and *Iḍā* the great, the three goddesses of beautiful
   ornaments,
   will come here to this sacrifice of ours for the self-purifying one.
9. *Tvaṣṭar*, the first-born herdsman who journeys in advance, do
   I summon here.
   The drop is Indra, the tawny bull; the self-purifying one is Prajāpati.
10. O self-purifying one, with your honeyed stream anoint the *Lord of the
    Forest*,
    the tawny one with a thousand branches, blazing, golden.
11. All you gods, come here to the *svāhā-cry* of the self-purifying one:
    Vāyu, Bṛhaspati, the Sun, Agni, and Indra, all of one accord.

IX.6 (718) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Soma's journey—to the gods, to Indra, and to us, as well as to the state of exhilaration and to material rewards—is the primary subject of this hymn. In the last two verses (8–9) Soma's association with poetry and with the exercise of poetic skill is mentioned. The last statement, that Soma takes to himself hymns, though they are hidden, is not entirely clear, but it may refer to his ability to stimulate poetic inspiration, and to cause poets to create new hymns from deep within themselves.

Noteworthy is also the pun in verse 2, where the drop (*indu*) is urged to flow as "Indra." The phonological similarity between these two words is often exploited elsewhere, indeed in the immediately preceding hymn (IX.5.9).

1. O Soma, as bull purify yourself in a gladdening stream as you seek
   the gods,
   as you seek us, in the sheep's fleece.
2. Toward this exhilarating exhilaration, o drop, flow as "Indra"—
   and toward prizewinning chargers.
3. Toward this ancient exhilaration rush into the filter as you are being
   pressed,
   and toward victory's prize and fame.
4. In succession, the droplets, the drops, have run like waters down
   a slope.
   Being purified, they have reached Indra.
5. Whom the ten maidens groom like a prizewinning steed,
   him playing in the wood(en vessel), beyond the sheep [=fleece],
6. That bullish sap—merge it with the cows, for exhilaration, for the gods'
   pursuit—
   the pressed soma for the taking.
7. The god for the god—pressed, he purifies himself in a stream
   for Indra,
   when he [=Indra] swells his milk.
8. The embodiment of the sacrifice, the pressed soma, having been pressed,
   purifies himself at speed.
   He protects the age-old poetic skill.
9. In just this way, as you are being purified and seeking Indra, for him to
   pursue exhilaration, you most exhilarating one,
   you make the hymns, though hidden, your own.

IX.7 (719) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

The word "soma" does not appear at all in this hymn, and the epithet "self-purifying" (*pávamāna*) only once, in verse 5 (a finite verb form from the same root is found in vs. 8). Verses 1 and 8 have a similar structure, especially in their final pādas, and

form a ring, with the last verse (9) addressed not to soma but to the world-halves and seemingly extra-hymnic. The two middle verses (4–5) contain the meat of the hymn: Soma is depicted both as a poet (as in the previous hymn, IX.6.8–9) and a successful king and warrior. The rest of the hymn (vss. 1–3, 6–8) depicts the usual journey of the soma around the fleece filter and into the wooden vessel in which he mixes with water. The final two verses of the hymn proper (7–8) name several of the divine recipients of soma; those in verse 7 are especially associated with the Morning Pressing.

1. The drops have surged along the path of truth, upon its foundation—the very splendid ones,
   recognizing its route.
2. Forth (goes) the stream, the forefront of the honey; it plunges through the great waters,
   to be extolled as the oblation among oblations.
3. Forth (he goes) as the forefront of speech, his yokemate; the bull has roared down into the wood(en vessel),
   toward his seat: he is the real rite.
4. When the poet, clothing himself in his poetic skills and manly powers, rushes around (the fleece),
   the racehorse strives to win the sun.
5. The self-purifying one sits over his opponents, like a king over the clans,
   when the ritual adepts set him in motion.
6. (Having circled) around the sheep's fleece, the dear tawny one sits in the wood(en vessels);
   husky-voiced, he is eager to prevail with his thought.
7. He goes with his exhilaration to Vāyu, Indra, and the Aśvins,
   with the joy that is in accord with his ordinances.
8. The waves of honey attract here through their purification Mitra and Varuṇa, and Bhaga,
   recognizing them through its powers.
9. You two World-Halves, for us to win the prize of honey, conquer wealth, conquer fame and goods.

IX.8 (719) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Although this hymn is, of course, dedicated to self-purifying Soma, the process is repeatedly described in the passive ("being purified," vss. 2, 3, 6) rather than in the usual reflexive construction. However, this grammatical peculiarity does not seem to deprive Soma of agency: he (or his juices) are urged to increase Indra's power

(vs. 1), provide us with power (vss. 2, 8), cause Indra to be generous to us (vs. 3) and provide us with mortal patrons as well (vs. 7), remove hostilities (vs. 7), and cause the rain to fall (vs. 8), among other things.

The middle verses (4–6) concern the preparation of soma; as usual, the materials used in the preparation are animatized (vss. 5–6): the "ewes" are the fleece filter, the "cows" and "cattle" the milk-mixture.

The first three verses reunite the group of gods to whom Soma went in the previous hymn (IX.7.7): Vāyu and the Aśvins (vs. 2) and Indra (vss. 1, 3), the principal deities of the Morning Pressing.

1. These soma juices have flowed toward Indra's own desire,
   increasing his heroic power.
2. Being purified, finding a seat in the cups, going to Vāyu and the Aśvins,
   let them confer good heroic power on us.
3. O Soma, rouse the heart of Indra to generosity, as you are being purified
   to take your seat on the womb of truth.
4. Ten fingers groom you; seven insightful thoughts propel you.
   Inspired poets have cheered you on.
5. For the gods, for their exhilaration, you who are surging through the ewes
   do we clothe with cows.
6. Being purified in the tubs, he, tawny and ruddy,
   has wrapped himself in garments of cattle.
7. Attract bounteous patrons for us through your purification. Strike away all hatreds.
   O drop, enter your comrade.
8. Stream rain from heaven and heavenly brilliance from the earth.
   Confer strength in battles on us, Soma.
9. Might we have a share in you, drawing the gaze of men, drunk by Indra, finding the sun—
   and a share in offspring and refreshment.

IX.9 (721) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Unlike the relatively straightforward preceding hymns, this one is full of puzzles and ambiguities, with the implements and process of soma purification compared to cosmic entities and actions. Some of the puzzles are illuminated by the next hymn, IX.10, which is in some ways a more straightforward twin to this one. This one also appears to be an omphalos hymn, with an inner ring

defined by numerological repetition in verses 4 and 6, around the omphalos verse 5.

On the ritual level, the soma is pressed between or in his two granddaughters (vs. 1): most likely the hands of the priest, on the basis of IX.10.2; after his journey (vss. 1–2), accompanied by hymns he is united with the waters (vss. 4–5), who make him their eye. He is called upon to give aid to the ritual and to the hymn (vss. 7–8).

This synopsis leaves a number of questions unanswered. Who, for example, are his two mothers in verse 3? Are they the same as his two female kinsmen in verse 1? Since Ṛgvedic poets delight in paradoxical kinship relationships, this is certainly possible. If so, they could be both the ritual implement (hands) and Heaven and Earth, and in this latter cosmic manifestation their son Soma, who makes them shine in verse 3, could be identified with the sun—an identification that is supported by the "single eye" of verse 4. Again under a cosmic interpretation the rivers of verse 4 can be not only the waters with which soma mixes in his ritual preparation, but also the heavenly streams (and indeed real rivers).

The referents in the middle verses 4–6 are especially floating and uncertain: both the insights and the rivers of verse 4 are feminine in gender. The agent of verse 5 (the omphalos verse) is feminine plural, and so could be either insights or rivers or both, and "the great" is also left unspecified. In verse 6 we encounter "the seven" again, which can either be the seven insights of verse 4 (which we also met in the preceding hymn, IX.8.4) or the rivers, since the canonical number of rivers is seven. This series of puzzles is capped by the final pāda of verse 6, with the impossible word *krívi*, which seems here to refer to Soma. The goddesses whom he satisfies could, again, be either the rivers or the insights (or perhaps even just goddesses).

The final three verses (7–9), with their requests, cause little difficulty, by contrast.

Although the mysteries of the hymn remain largely unsolved, we can note a thematic strain that provides some unity: the issue of light and darkness. The Soma/Sun of verse 3 lights up his mothers; he may also be the Sun in verse 4. In verse 7 we call upon Soma to help us combat darkness and in verse 8 to light up the lights. The last word of the hymn (vs. 9) is "sun" (*svàḥ*). It seems that in this hymn Soma is both identified with the Sun and seen as a force that can win and keep the light that Vedic people so craved and worried about. This focus on the sun is also found in the next hymn, IX.10.

1. The poet of heaven makes the circuit of his own vital powers, when
   propelled between his two granddaughters
   as he is being pressed—he who has a poet's purpose.
2. You, delightful to the praiseworthy dwelling place, to the race without
   deceit [=gods]—
   rush ever forward in your most pleasing pursuit (of them).
3. He, their blazing son, made his two mothers shine—he just born and
   they just born,
   he the great and they the great, increasing through truth.
4. Propelled by seven insightful thoughts, he quickened the rivers without
   deceit,
   they who strengthened him as the single eye.
5. They installed the youth as dominating and indestructible for the great;
   they installed the drop, Indra, under your commandment.
6. The immortal draft-horse looks upon the seven as he draws.
   Krivi has satisfied the goddesses.
7. Help us in our ritual arrangements, o male. The shades of darkness must
   be fought, Soma.
   You shall keep smiting them, o you who are being purified.
8. Now make the paths for our newer and newer hymn reach their goal.
   Make the lights light up as of old.
9. Self-purifying one, bestow great fame, the cow, and the horse along with
   heroes.
   Win wisdom, win the sun.

IX.10 (722) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn, which shares a number of themes with IX.9, begins with three verses heavy with similes, quickly sketching the pressing, filtering, and mixing of the soma juices. After a verse (4) with no poetic figuration, the second part of the hymn switches to metaphor, and especially to metaphors of and identifications with the sun, as in IX.9. The spreading of the soma juices across the sheep's fleece is likened to suns and their rays (vs. 5). The "lone one" in verse 7 is probably both the soma crossing the filter and the sun crossing heaven. Soma's eye is first tied to the sun (vs. 8), and then the sun implicitly becomes his eye (vs. 9). In addition, the "portion" of Vivasvant ("the one shining forth") and of Dawn in verse 5 probably refers to the radiance of these divinities, obtained by the soma juices, which are then transformed into suns.

Other metaphors involve the poets and sacrificers: the doors of poetry (vs. 6), the seven siblings of the priests (vs. 7), who are no doubt the seven inspired thoughts of previous hymns (IX.9.4, 6; IX.8.4). This latter metaphor of kinship then provides our own kinship relationship to Soma himself (vs. 8). One image remains somewhat obscure: in verse 9 the "track of heaven" is said to have been placed in hiding by the Adhvaryus. This must be a specific ritual reference, with the track of heaven being likened to Soma's own tracks—perhaps when Soma disappears into the fleece when the Adhvaryu priests are first pressing him.

1. While being pressed, the soma juices, resounding like chariots, seeking
   fame like chargers,
   have marched forth for wealth.
2. Being propelled like chariots, they have run between the two hands (of
   the priest).
   Their takings are like those of decisive victors.
3. Like kings by encomia, the soma juices are anointed with cows,
   like the sacrifice by its seven ordainers.
4. While resounding [/being pressed] for exhilaration with might and song,
   the drops,
   pressed, rush around in a stream.
5. Having obtained (the portion) of Vivasvant, begetting the portion
   of Dawn,
   the suns stretch out across the fine (fleece).
6. The ancient bards thrust open the doors of poetic thoughts—
   the Āyus for the raging of the bull.
7. They sit all together, the Hotars with their seven siblings,
   guiding the track of the lone one safely across.
8. He has bound his navel to our navel, as also his eye to the sun.
   He has yielded progeny to the poet as milk.
9. Over his own dear (tracks) and the track of heaven, which was placed in
   hiding by the Adhvaryus,
   he looks with the eye of the sun.

IX.11 (723) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Much of this hymn consists of exhortations to the priests to perform their parts of the soma preparation, interspersed with addresses to Soma to purify himself for our benefit. Unlike the last few hymns attributed to the same poet, the language and syntax present no difficulties, and there is almost no imagery or verbal figuration. It is a no-nonsense production.

1. Sing to him, men, to the self-purifying drop,
   as he seeks to attain the gods.
2. The Atharvan-priests have now mixed your milk with honey—
   mixed the god for the god in seeking the gods.
3. Purify yourself as weal for our cow, weal for our people, weal for our
   charger,
   weal for our plants, o king.

4. Now, to the self-powerful brown one, to the ruddy one who touches
   heaven,
   to Soma, chant a song.
5. Purify the soma pressed with stones set in motion by the hands.
   Rinse the honey in honey.
6. Just with homage approach it. Just with curds mix it.
   Place the drop in Indra.
7. As the limitless smiter of foes, o Soma, purify yourself as weal for
   our cow,
   acting for the gods according to their desire.
8. You are poured around, Soma, for Indra to drink, for his exhilaration—
   perceiving thoughts as master of thought.
9. Self-purifying Soma, give us wealth and an abundance of heroes,
   o drop, along with Indra as our yokemate.

IX.12 (724) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Although entirely focused on the process of soma preparation, this hymn displays the common rhetorical inflation of this process by associating it with cosmic elements. Thus, for example, in verse 4 Soma is both "in the navel of heaven" and "in the sheep's fleece"—both referring to the filter; the "surface of the sea" in verse 6 is either the soma itself collected in the vessel or the water with which it mixes; the "dear tracks of heaven" in verse 8 are the meanderings of soma through the fleece filter (see also IX.10.9). The buffalo-cow in verse 3 is probably the hide on which the pressing apparatus is set. Only in the last verse (9) does the poet make any requests of the god.

1. The soma juices have surged, the drops pressed in the seat of truth,
   most honeyed for Indra.
2. The inspired poets have roared—like mother cows to their calf—
   to Indra, to drink the soma.
3. Arousing exhilaration, attentive to poetic inspiration, he dwells in his
   seat, in the wave of the river:
   Soma is set upon the buffalo-cow.
4. In the navel of heaven, he, wide-gazing, shows his greatness in the sheep's
   fleece:
   Soma, who is a poet with good purpose.
5. The soma that is in the tubs, that is placed within the filter,
   that does the drop embrace.

6. The drop sends forth his speech upon the surface of the sea,
   quickening the cask dripping with honey.
7. The lord of the forest who has praise as his own, yielding the juice of
   insights within (the filter),
   propelling the human generations,
8. Being himself propelled, Soma rushes toward the dear tracks of heaven,
   the sage poet, with the stream of an inspired poet.
9. Self-purifying one, secure wealth of a thousand lusters
   close at hand to us, o drop.

IX.13 (725) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

The first verse, with its mention of Vāyu and Indra, identifies this as the first soma-offering of the day. Otherwise the hymn is a confection of clichés familiar from many other soma hymns.

1. As he is being purified, Soma rushes in a thousand streams beyond the
   sheep [=fleece]
   to his encounter with Vāyu and Indra.
2. You who are seeking help, sing forth to the self-purifying inspired poet,
   who has been pressed to pursue the gods.
3. The thousand-faceted soma juices purify themselves to win the prize,
   being hymned to pursue the gods.
4. And for us to win the prize, by purifying yourself (bring) lofty
   refreshments
   and a heaven-bright abundance of heroes, o drop.
5. By purifying themselves, let them bring thousandfold wealth and an
   abundance of heroes for us—
   the divine drops being pressed.
6. Like racehorses being driven on by their drivers, they have surged to win
   the prize—
   swift across the sheep's fleece.
7. Bellowing like cows to their calf, the drops rush.
   They have run between the hands (of the priest).
8. Pleasing to Indra, exhilarating, constantly roaring—o self-purifying one,
   strike away all hatreds.
9. Striking away the non-givers, purifying yourselves, looking like the sun,
   sit on the womb of truth.

IX.14 (726) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

The poet of this hymn seems to be practicing his figurative language, presenting us in nonsequential verses with several different versions of the same step in the preparation of soma. This is especially clear in his depiction of the manual manipulation of soma: in verse 2 the hands are called "troops of five kinsmen," in verse 5 the same fingers are "the granddaughters of Vivasvant" (here the prototype sacrificer), and in verse 7 a standard word for "fingers" finally makes its appearance. Similarly he gives two quite similar expressions for the mixing with milk, both using the image of clothing (vss. 3, 5), and in verse 6 there is a glancing reference to Soma's desire for cows.

The episodic structure of the hymn also seems reflected in the shifting tenses of the verbs. In particular, the past tense of verse 3ab seems to follow directly from verse 1, with the presents of verses 2 and 3c in alternation.

1. The poet flowed around and forth, set upon the swell of the river,
   bringing the decisive action for which many are eager.
2. When the troops of five kinsmen [=hands], eager to work,
   prepare the steadfast one with a hymn—
3. After that, all the gods found exhilaration in the juice of him, the
   tempestuous one—
   when he clothes himself with cows.
4. Spilling over, he runs out, leaving behind the stems that belong to
   his body.
   In this place here he slams together with his yokemate [=Indra].
5. He who, like a handsome youth, has been groomed by the
   granddaughters of Vivasvant [=fingers],
   making the cows like a garment,
6. With a yen for cows, he goes crossways along the fine prop [=fleece].
   He raises the call that he knows as his own.
7. The fingers have come together to him, grooming the lord of
   refreshment.
   They have grasped the back of the prizewinning horse.
8. Ever embracing all good things, heavenly and earthly, o Soma,
   seeking us, make your journey.

IX.15 (727) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

A simple device provides formal unity to this hymn: the form "this one" that begins every verse. In the first six verses it is the nominative subject (*eṣá*), in the last two (vss. 7–8) the accusative object (*etám*), so that there is some progression and development, even while the referent remains constant.

Except for verse 2, the focus is entirely on Soma's journey across the fleece and into the cup, where both the waters (vs. 5) and the milk (vs. 6) await him. (The mention of grasses in vs. 6 is unclear.)

1. This one drives with insight along the fine (fleece), a champion with his swift chariots,
   going to his encounter with Indra.
2. This one exercises his insight on many things for the divine assemblage on high,
   where the immortals have their seats.
3. This one, propelled, is led through and within (the filter) along the path of beauty,
   when the fervent thrust him on.
4. This one, the bull of the herd, sharpens his horns, ever shaking them,
   deploying his manly powers with his might.
5. This one, a prizewinning horse, speeds with his beautiful bright shoots,
   becoming the lord of the rivers.
6. This one, having journeyed along the "articulation" (of the fleece) toward the "plodding goods" [=cows],
   goes down into the grasses.
7. This one worthy of grooming do the Āyus groom in the wooden cups,
   when he has produced great refreshments.
8. This one here the ten fingers and the seven insights groom,
   the most exhilarating one possessing good weapons.

IX.16 (728) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

This little hymn presents several difficulties of interpretation, even though like many hymns in this series it does not deviate from the ritual scene, especially the filtering of the pressed juice, and it is built around a limited verbal lexicon, especially the phonological near mirror images √*sṛj* "surge" and √*ṛṣ* "rush." In verse 1 Soma is implicitly identified with Etaśa, the sun's horse, and in verse 7 he swells "like the back of heaven." But otherwise cosmic references and comparisons are absent, and

the soma again and again runs across the filter (vss. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8) and joins with the waters (vss. 2–3) and the milk (vss. 2 and 6), to furnish Indra's drink (vss. 3, 5).

The most problematic form is the hapax *ánapta* in verse 3, about which there is no scholarly agreement. We have very tentatively connected it with *naptī́* "granddaughter," a very rare word that nonetheless appears twice in this poet's collection (IX.9.1, 14.5), used of the preparers of soma or their equipment.

1. The pressers pro(pel) your sap in their arms, for ardent exhilaration.
   Etaśa charges like a surge (of waters).
2. With resolve we accompany the charioteer of skill, who clothes himself in waters along with his stalk,
   the winner of cows, among the fine (tufts of fleece).
3. Send the soma surging into the filter, the one difficult to overtake in the waters (even) without the granddaughters(' preparation) [?].
   Purify him for Indra to drink.
4. With attention Soma rushes forth into the filter of the one being purified;
   with resolve he has taken his seat.
5. Forth to you, Indra, the drops, the soma juices, have surged with homage—
   for the great taking of the decisive victor.
6. Being purified within the sheep's shape, rushing toward all that is glorious,
   like a champion he stands among the cattle.
7. Having swelled like the back of heaven, the stream of the pressed ritual adept
   rushes at will into the filter.
8. You, Soma, (sending forth speech) attentive to poetic inspiration, being purified in your full measure among the Āyus,
   run through the sheep's fleece.

IX.17 (729) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

A straightforward hymn: the soma juices flow quickly on their journey through the filter into the vessels and thence to Indra and the gods, a journey compared to that of the sun. The role of speech in the soma sacrifice is also emphasized, with soma both inspiring speech and being strengthened by it.

1. Like rivers along a downward slope, smashing obstacles, turbulent,
   the swift soma juices have been sent surging.
2. As they are pressed, the drops, the soma juices, like rains to the earth,
   have flowed to Indra.

3. The exhilarating drink of exhilaration, the soma, rushes into the filter beyond the waves,
   smashing aside the demons, seeking the gods.
4. He runs into the tubs; he is poured around into the filter.
   He grows strong through the hymns at the sacrifices.
5. You blaze beyond the three luminous realms like the (sun) ascending to heaven, o Soma.
   Sending forth (speech), you have spurred it on, like the sun.
6. The inspired poets, the bards, have roared to him at the head of the sacrifice,
   keeping the dear one in their sight.
7. The men, the inspired poets, seeking help, groom you, the prizewinning horse,
   with their insights, for the divine conclave.
8. Flow following the stream of honey. You, the sharp (soma), have taken your seat,
   pleasing to be drunk for truth.

IX.18 (730) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

The most salient feature of this hymn is its pāda-length refrain, promising health and wholeness. The beginning (vs. 1) and end (vs. 7) of the hymn record the ritual moment, the purification in the filter. The intermediate verses, especially 4–6, ascribe human and then cosmic powers to the ritual substance. Verses 4–6 are also syntactically unresolved, as they consist of three parallel relative clauses in the ab pādas, couched in the 3rd person, interrupted by the refrain addressing Soma in the 2nd person in the c pāda. The 3rd-person main clause that brings closure to this structure is found in the final verse, 7ab.

It is noteworthy that the word "soma" is found only in the first verse.

1. Mountain-dwelling Soma, being pressed, has flowed around in the filter.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
2. You are the inspired one, you the sage poet, the honey that is born from the stalk.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
3. All the gods, joined in fellowship, have attained the drinking of you.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
4. He who holds all desirable good things in his two hands—
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.

5. Who will yield milk like these two great world-halves, the two mothers together—
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
6. Who on the same day rushes around both worlds with the prizes of victory—
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
7. He, tempestuous in the tubs, kept roaring while being purified.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.

IX.19 (731) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn contains fewer direct ritual references than recent hymns. The focus is instead on the exchange relation between Soma and his praisers: hymns for goods, an exchange that is seen as, literally, fecund. Our insights and the words they produce are depicted as females waiting to be impregnated (vs. 5) and made to swell (vs. 2), as they call to the bullish Soma for his semen (vs. 4). The impregnated thoughts will give birth not only to inspired poetry, but also to the material goods that this poetry will win, as verses 1 and 6 make clear. The final two verses (6–7) also call for Soma's help in besting rivals.

1. O Soma, what bright good thing, heavenly or earthly, is worthy of hymns, bring that here to us as you are being purified.
2. For you two, o Soma, you and Indra, are lords of the sun, lords of cattle.
   Showing your mastery, make our insights swell.
3. The bull, being purified among the Āyus, thundering upon the ritual grass,
   although being a fallow bay horse, has sat down on his womb.
4. Our insightful words have bellowed over the seed of the bull,
   the mothers (over that) of the calf, their son.
5. Will he indeed set an embryo for those females yearning for a bull, as he is being purified—
   for those who give the gleaming milk?
6. Seek to win over those who stand aside, but set fear among our rivals.
   Self-purifying one, find wealth.
7. Soma, undermine the bull-like power of our rival, his tempestuousness, his vigor,
   whether he be in the distance or nearby.

IX.20 (731) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one is less concerned with the details of the ritual (though they are not absent: the fleece filter, vss. 1, 7; the water and the cups, vs. 6) than with the ritual economy, where, for example, our thought helps purify Soma (vs. 3) and he in return finds wealth for the poets, singers, and patrons. Although most of the phraseology is standard for soma hymns, the image in verse 5 of Soma entering the songs seems to be a deliberate reversal of passages in which the songs themselves enter a god, and seems also to imitate and vary the numerous passages in which Soma enters Indra.

1. Forth the poet rushes, through the sheep's fleece, to pursue the gods,
   having prevailed over all opponents.
2. For he sends to the singers a prize of cattle
   in thousands, as he purifies himself.
3. With your attention you embrace all things; you purify yourself with our
   poetic thought.
   Soma, you will find fame for us.
4. Rush toward lofty glory, toward enduring wealth for our generous
   patrons.
   Bring refreshment here to the praisers.
5. You well keep commandments like a king. You have entered the songs,
   o Soma,
   while being purified, o unerring draft-horse.
6. That draft-horse, difficult to overtake in the waters, being groomed in
   (the priest's) hands,
   Soma, sits in the cups.
7. Playful, ready to give like a generous patron, you go through the filter,
   o Soma,
   establishing an abundance of heroes for the praiser.

IX.21 (733) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāsyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

For most of its length this hymn is a conventional depiction of the flowing of the soma drops and of the benefits that attend it. Verses 5 and 6, however, which are constructed in parallel, introduce twists of imagery. Addressed to the soma drops, the verses urge them to instruct the ungenerous man—presumably a patron who does not distribute the appropriate priestly gifts at the soma sacrifice. In verse 6 the drops are commanded to set their own will to this task, as a craftsman sets a new chariot part, probably a wheel. In verse 5 they are meant to set "the tawny tracker" in an unspecified being or thing ("in this one"); although the referents for both have been variously identified, we believe that the tawny tracker is Soma himself, and Indra, already mentioned in verse 1, is the desired location.

1. These are running for Indra, these drops, the ardent soma juices,
   bringing exhilaration and finding the sun,
2. Warding off attackers, finding wide space for the presser,
   by themselves creating vitality for the praiser.
3. Moving playfully at will toward one and the same seat,
   the drops have flowed in various ways into the swell of the river.
4. These self-purifying ones have obtained all things of value,
   when propelled like the team on a chariot.
5. O drops, set the tawny tracker [=Soma himself] here in him [=Indra], to
   instruct (the man)
   who does not give to us.
6. Like a craftsman [/Ṛbhu] a new chariot (wheel), set your will to
   instruct (him).
   Purify yourselves to gleaming with your flood.
7. These (drops) here have bellowed; the prizewinning horses have made the
   finish line.
   They have stimulated the thought of (the poet) who is really present.

IX.22 (734) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with the conventional image of the soma juices racing forward (vs. 1), but their journey soon becomes both cosmic and mystical. Their rush is compared to cosmic forces in verse 2, and in verses 4–5 they travel through the cosmos itself. But the poet reaches even further conceptually: he equates this cosmic journey with a ritual one. In matched expressions in verses 3 and 5 the juices pervade not only the cosmic spaces (vs. 5) but also our "insights" (vs. 3), that is, the thoughts that produce ritual poetry. And in verse 6 they reach a higher place than the cosmic space, namely the sacrifice itself, symbolized, as often, by the stretched thread.

In the final verse (7) this journey theme is abruptly abandoned, and the disjunction between this verse and what precedes is also conveyed by the switch from plural ("soma juices") to singular ("Soma"), and from 3rd-person reference to 2nd. It also contains an implicit equation of Soma with (the unmentioned) Saramā, Indra's dog

who reacquired for him the cows stolen by the Paṇis (see esp. X.108)—an equation seemingly unmotivated by what precedes. (The Paṇis are mentioned only one other time in the IXth Maṇḍala [IX.11.2].) Perhaps the cosmic journey of Soma reminded the poet of Saramā's long trek. The stretched thread of the sacrifice ends the hymn, and brings it back to the ritual scene.

1. These swift soma juices have been propelled forward like prizewinning chariots,
   surges (of them) sent surging—
2. These, (surging) wide like the winds, like the rains of Parjanya,
   (surging) at will like the flickerings of fire.
3. These purified soma juices, mixed with curds, attentive to poetic inspiration,
   have pervaded our insights with inspiration.
4. These immortal ones, once groomed, have not flagged in their flowing,
   as they seek to reach the paths through the airy space.
5. These, going forth widely, have pervaded the backs of the two world-halves,
   and this highest airy space.
6. They have reached the highest thread being stretched, along the inclines,
   and this one that is to be higher still.
7. You, Soma, secured from the Paṇis the good things of cattle.
   You have roared toward the stretched thread.

IX.23 (735) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn begins very like the last one, with the rushing of the soma juices, but goes in a different direction. Verse 2 introduces the Āyus, men both of the past (so vs. 2, also IX.10.6) and of the present, who are regularly credited with the preparation of the soma in the IXth Maṇḍala and by this very poet (IX.10.6, 15.7, 16.8, 19.3). But surprisingly in verse 4 the Āyus are *identified* with the soma juices, a rhetorical strategy that must result from the fact that in this verse the juices purify themselves *into* the exhilarating drink; in other words they prepare themselves and therefore behave like the Āyus who prepare the soma.

In the last three verses (5–7) Soma's relationship to Indra becomes the focus: in verse 5 the rushing soma acquires the power of Indra as its essence, and in verses 6 and 7 this power is transferred to Indra, to perform his heroic deeds, both in the past and in the present. Verse 7 thus harkens back to the ancient Āyus and their newer path in verse 2.

1. The swift soma juices have surged forth in a stream of honey, of exhilaration,
   toward all our poems.
2. The ancient Āyus have marched along a newer track.
   They have begotten the sun, for it to shine.
3. Bring here to us, self-purifying one, the patrimony of the impious stranger.
   Produce refreshments along with progeny.
4. The soma juices, the Āyus, purify themselves into the exhilarating drink of exhilaration,
   (going) toward the cask dripping with honey.
5. The soma rushes steadily, acquiring Indrian strength as its essence,
   affording good heroes, protecting against imprecations.
6. You purify yourself for Indra, o Soma, and for the gods as their shared exhilaration.
   O drop, you strive to win the prize.
7. Having drunk of it, of its exhilarating drinks, Indra smashed the unopposable obstacles,
   and he shall smash them now.

IX.24 (736) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is the last attributed to Asita or Devala Kāśyapa, and yet again the hymn begins with the running forth of the soma juices. It is an unremarkable hymn, but covers the major topics, though not in strict chronological order: the grooming in water (vs. 1), the mixture with milk (vs. 2), the filtering (vss. 3, 5). That soma is Indra's drink is repeatedly emphasized (vss. 2, 3, 5, and under the qualifier "conqueror of territories," a word regularly applied to Indra, vs. 4). Soma himself is given the most characteristic of Indra's epithets—"obstacle-smasher"—in the superlative in verse 6.

1. The soma juices have run forth, the self-purifying drops.
   Brought to readiness, they have been groomed in the waters.
2. The cows have run toward them, like waters going along a slope.
   Becoming purified, they have reached Indra.
3. You run forth, self-purifying Soma, for Indra to drink.
   Held by men, you are led through (the filter).
4. Bringing exhilaration to superior men, o Soma, purify yourself for the one who conquers the territories,
   you who are the winner to be celebrated.

5. O drop, when pressed by the stones you run around the filter,
   fit for the fundament of Indra.
6. Purify yourself, best smasher of obstacles, to be celebrated with hymns,
   gleaming, pure, unerring.
7. Gleaming and pure he is called "Soma," he of the pressed honey,
   pursuing the gods, smashing those who utter evil.

IX.25 (737) Soma Pavamāna

Dṛḍhacyuta Āgastya
6 verses: gāyatrī

This is the only hymn in the Ṛgveda attributed to this poet, though his patronymic connects him to Agastya, the poet of a number of hymns in the late Ist Maṇḍala (I.165–91)—including the dialogue hymn I.165, in which Agastya mediates between Indra and the Maruts, who demand a share of the soma sacrifice. This connection may account for the mention of the Maruts in verse 1 as recipients of soma, along with Vāyu: the Maruts are quite scarce in the Soma Maṇḍala.

The hymn is otherwise unremarkable, though one might note the insistent identification of Soma as a *kaví* ("poet," vss. 3, 5, 6).

1. Purify yourself, as the one who brings skill to realization, for the gods to
   drink, o tawny one,
   the exhilarating drink for the Maruts and for Vāyu.
2. Self-purifying one, sped by insight, ever roaring toward your womb,
   enter Vāyu according to the (ritual) statute.
3. The bull becomes beautiful together with the gods, the dear poet in
   his womb,
   the smasher of obstacles, best pursuer of the gods.
4. Entering into all forms, becoming purified, the delightful one journeys
   to where the immortals have their seats.
5. Ruddy Soma, giving birth to songs, purifies himself, attended by the Āyus,
   going to Indra with a poet's purpose.
6. Purify yourself in a stream in the filter, you most exhilarating poet,
   to sit in the womb of chant.

IX.26 (738) Soma Pavamāna

Idhmavāha Dārḍhacyuta
6 verses: gāyatrī

Attributed to a descendant of the poet of the previous hymn, based on his patronymic, this hymn contains nothing novel in terms of content, but it is tightly structured. All

verses but the last begin with "that one, him" (*tám*) referring to the Soma, while the last begins with a 2nd-person variant on this, "you" (*táṃ tvā*), literally "that you." The last four verses (3–6) all contain a 3rd plural "they impell(ed)" (*ahyan, hinvanti* built to the same root √*hi*), and the compounds of 3c and 5c "...to/of many" (*bhúri*) phonologically echo the word for "arms" (*bhuríjor*) in the middle verse (4a).

1. Him have the inspired poets groomed—the prizewinner in the lap
   of Aditi,
   through the fine (fleece) and with insight.
2. Him have the cows lowed toward, the imperishable one of a thousand
   streams,
   the drop, supporter of heaven.
3. Him, the ritual adept, have they impelled through their wisdom—the one
   purifying himself in heaven,
   steadfast, giving nurture to many.
4. Him have they impelled between the two arms with the insight of
   Vivasvant, him who is also clad in it,
   the undeceivable lord of speech.
5. Him do the siblings [=fingers] impel with the stones on the back (of the
   filter)—the tawny one,
   delightful, drawing the gaze of many.
6. You, self-purifying one, grown strong through song [/on the mountain],
   do the ritual adepts impel
   as exhilaration for Indra, o drop.

IX.27 (739) Soma Pavamāna

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Though attributed to a different poet and a different poetic lineage, this hymn, like the last one (IX.26), is unified by a repeated initial pronoun in every verse, in this case "this one, he" (*eṣá*) referring to Soma. Again, the content is conventional, though there is emphasis on Soma's victories and acquisitions (vss. 1, 2, 3, 4) and his successful competition with the sun (vss. 2, 5). The cosmic aspect of Soma is thus raised but not insisted upon.

1. This one, the much-praised poet, spills over into the filter,
   striking away failures, while being purified.
2. This one, winning the sun, is poured all around for Indra and Vāyu
   in the filter, the one who brings skill to realization.
3. This one is led through (the filter) by men—the head of heaven, the bull,
   the pressed
   soma in the wooden (vessels), acquiring [/knowing] all.

4. This one, purifying himself, has roared, seeking cows, seeking gold—
   the drop, winning completely, not to be laid low.
5. This one races with the sun while purifying himself in heaven—
   in the filter he is the exhilarating drink of exhilaration.
6. This one, the tempestuous tawny bull, has flowed in the midspace,
   toward Indra—the drop as it is becoming purified.

IX.28 (740) Soma Pavamāna

Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Attributed to another Āṅgirasa, whose given name is similar to the poet of the last hymn (IX.27), this follows the same pattern, with initial "he, that one" (*eṣá*) opening every verse. Otherwise it is constructed of the usual clichés, though the rhetoric is nicely balanced.

1. This one, the prizewinner propelled by men, all-knowing as the lord
   of mind,
   runs through the sheep's fleece.
2. This one has flowed into the filter, the soma pressed for the gods,
   entering all their domains.
3. This one, an immortal god, beautifies himself in his womb,
   the smasher of obstacles, best pursuer of the gods.
4. This one, the ever-roaring bull, held by the ten siblings [=fingers],
   runs to the wooden cups.
5. This one, self-purifying, boundless, made the sun shine,
   as the all-knowing one (knowing) all the domains.
6. This one, tempestuous, undeceivable Soma, rushes while being purified,
   pursuing the gods, smashing those who utter evil.

IX.29 (741) Soma Pavamāna

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Another short and conventional hymn, with a focus on winning goods and conquering enemies (esp. vss. 3–5). It is attributed to the same poet as IX.27.

1. His streams have flowed forth, those of the pressed bull, who with his
   strength
   attends upon the gods in sequence.

2. The ritual adepts groom the team—the bards singing with their song
   the one born as the light worthy of hymns.
3. These things are easy to conquer for you as you become purified, o Soma
   providing outstanding goods.
   Increase the sea that is worthy of hymns.
4. Winning all good things, purify yourself in a stream, Soma.
   Drive hostilities to a single end.
5. Protect us well from the non-giver, from the mere sound of any such a one,
   when we have become free of insult.
6. O drop, in purifying yourself in a stream attract earthly and heavenly
   wealth.
   Bring here your brilliant tempestuous force.

IX.30 (742) Soma Pavamāna

Bindu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The first verse of this hymn is very like the opening verse of IX.29, and it is constructed of the usual building blocks of soma hymns, particularly those in gāyatrī meter. It clusters especially closely with the three hymns that precede it: these four hymns (IX.27–30) are all attributed to poets with the patronymic Āṅgirasa, and all four contain at least one form of *śúṣma* "tempestuous force" or *śuṣmín* "tempestuous" (IX.27.6; 28.6; 29.6; 30.1, 3), mostly in the final verse. This word thus seems to be the signature of this little group of poets. (The word does not pattern closely with other Āṅgirasa poets, even in the IXth Maṇḍala.)

1. His streams have flowed forth, those of the tempestuous one, into the
   filter at will.
   While becoming purified, he sends out his speech.
2. The drop, being impelled by the pressers, being groomed, ever roaring,
   raises a call appropriate to Indra.
3. Attract for us tempestuous force that can overcome men, much-craved
   force consisting of heroes,
   when you purify yourself in a stream, o Soma.
4. Soma, purifying himself in a stream, has flowed forth, beyond (the filter),
   to the wooden cups to take his seat.
5. They impel you, the most honeyed tawny one, in the waters with their
   stones,
   for Indra to drink, o drop.
6. Press the most honeyed soma for Indra who bears the mace,
   the dear, exhilarating one for his warrior band.

IX.31 (743) Soma Pavamāna

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Another unremarkable gāyatrī hymn. Parallel constructions and phraseology (e.g., the fronted "for you" [*túbhyam*] in vss. 3, 5, the fronted "be/become" [*bhávā*] of vss. 2, 4) give a sense of unity. Unlike many soma hymns, where the finale delivers the soma to Indra (e.g., the final verses of nearby hymns such as IX.23.6–7, 26.6, 27.6, 30.6), here it is "we" who declare our desire for his presence and partnership (vs. 6).

The poet, Gotama Rāhūgaṇa, is also the composer of a soma hymn in the first maṇḍala, I.91, and verse 4 in this hymn is identical to I.91.16, which occurs in a triad of ritually connected verses.

1. The self-purifying soma juices have marched forth rich in purpose.
   They make wealth manifest.
2. Become the increaser of brilliance from heaven and from earth, o drop;
   become the lord of prizes.
3. For you rush the favoring winds, for you the rivers.
   O Soma, they increase your greatness.
4. Swell here, and let bullish power come together for you from all sides, Soma.
   Be at the gathering for the prize.
5. For you, o brown one, the cows have yielded imperishable ghee and milk
   upon the highest back.
6. You—who have good weapons, who are really present, o lord of creation—
   we want your fellowship, o drop.

IX.32 (744) Soma Pavamāna

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Although this hymn begins with the almost ubiquitous journeying forth of the soma juices (see, e.g., the first verses of IX.10, 17, 20, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 41, 44, all beginning, like this, with *prá* "forth" followed by a verb of motion somewhere in the verse), it breaks the pattern of the recent collections of Soma clichés, especially with the cascade of similes in verses 3–5. This expert handling of the constricted form of gāyatrī soma hymns may lend credence to the Anukramaṇī's attribution to Śyāvāśva Ātreya, the ingenious poet of the Marut cycle in Maṇḍala V.

1. The soma juices, arousing exhilaration, pressed at the rite, have marched forth
   for the fame of our benefactor.
2. Then the maidens of Trita [=fingers] impel him, the tawny one, with the stones,
   the drop for Indra to drink.
3. Then, just as (the lead) wild goose (sets) its flock (to honking), he has made the thought of everyone bellow.
   Like a steed he is anointed [/driven together] with the cows.
4. O Soma, looking down on both (worlds?), like a great wild bird launched in flight you rush,
   settling down on the womb of truth.
5. The cows have lowed to him, like a young woman to her dear lover.
   He has gone to (them?) as to a contest that has been set.
6. Destine brilliant glory for us, both for our benefactors and for me—
   wisdom and fame as our winnings.

IX.33 (745) Soma Pavamāna

Trita Āptya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Once again the hymn begins with the soma flowing forth. There is, however, less emphasis on the physical process of purification, and more on the sounds that accompany it: verse 4 introduces three voices, which may be the three types of ritual speech, the ṛc, yajus, and sāman familiar from later śrauta ritual, or may refer to the priestly formulations (5a), the bellowing of the cows (4b), and the roar of the rushing soma itself (4c). The theme continues in verse 5, which also highlights "truth," found in verse 2 as well.

The hymn is bookended by watery references: the simile of the waves of water in verse 1 returns in the final verse (6) as the seas of wealth that soma will produce for us.

1. Forth go the soma juices, attentive to poetic inspiration, like waves of the waters,
   to the wooden (cups) like buffaloes to the woods.
2. To the wooden cups they have flowed, brown and gleaming, in a stream of truth,
   to the prize of cows.
3. Pressed for Indra and Vāyu, for Varuṇa and the Maruts,
   for Viṣṇu, the soma juices rush.
4. The three voices rise up, the milk-cows bellow,
   and the tawny one goes ever roaring.

5. The sacred formulations, youthfully exuberant mothers of truth, have lowed to him.
   They keep grooming the child of heaven.
6. Four seas of wealth for us, Soma, from every direction,
   in the thousands—bring these in purifying yourself.

IX.34 (746) Soma Pavamāna

Trita Āptya
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with the usual rushing forth of the soma, but achieves an unusual ring, since in the last verse (6) it is the songs that rush (using the same verb, *arṣa(n)ti*) to him. What lies between is, for the most part, unremarkable. Verse 2 lists the recipients of the soma, a longer list than usual (and a verse almost identical to vs. 3 in the previous hymn, IX.33), and verses 3–4 concern the preparation of the drink. However, verse 5 is difficult: the Maruts milk for themselves (or yield as their milk) the oblation in the direction of "the upper surface of truth." Although in the context of the hymn, soma should be the product of milking (see vs. 3), the liquid the Maruts ordinarily milk is rain. Moreover, "the upper surface of truth" is a puzzling phrase, which occurs elsewhere only in the mystical and baffling Vena hymn (X.123.2). Since the latter hymn seems to concern the mystical identification between soma and the sun, it is likely that here too we have double reference, with the ritual substance soma assimilated to the cosmic fecundator, the rain, and "the upper surface of truth" referring both to the soma filter and to heaven (or the reservoir of rain in heaven).

1. Being pressed, being impelled, the drop rushes forth in its full measure in a stream,
   shattering the fastnesses by its might.
2. Pressed for Indra and Vāyu, for Varuṇa and the Maruts,
   for Viṣṇu, the soma rushes.
3. The bull controlled by bulls, the soma, do they press with stones.
   They milk out its milk with their skill.
4. It becomes the one for Trita to groom; it becomes the drink of exhilaration for Indra.
   The tawny one is anointed with the forms (of milk).
5. They whose mother is Pṛśni [=Maruts] milk for themselves the cherished oblation dearest to them
   toward the upper surface of truth.
6. These unswerving songs, flowing together, rush to him.
   Bellowing, he has made the milk-cows bellow.

IX.35 (747) Soma Pavamāna

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Soma as the source and support of wealth and as ally in conflict is the theme of this hymn, which is characterized by pleasing etymological figures (e.g., vss. 3, 4, 6) and variant repetitions (e.g., vss. 2 + 5).

1. Bringing broad wealth for us, o self-purifying one, purify yourself in a stream
   with which you will find the light for us.
2. You drop who set the sea to swaying, who set all in motion, purify yourself
   as the supporter of our wealth with your strength.
3. With you as hero, you possessor of heroes, might we overcome those who give battle.
   Stream toward us what is choice.
4. The drop sends forth (its speech), the prizewinning seer seeking to win the prize,
   finding his commandments to be his weapons.
5. Him who sets speech to swaying do we clothe with songs as he is being purified—
   Soma, the herdsmaster of the people.
6. Under whose commandment all people find support—under that of the master of support
   who brings outstanding goods while he is being purified.

IX.36 (748) Soma Pavamāna

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with a noble image of Soma as a racehorse racing to the finish, and the second verse contains another equine comparison, though with a more lowly type of horse. This theme is abandoned until the final verse (6), when Soma goes seeking horses for the worshipers. The hymn is otherwise a fairly standard soma hymn, though one might note that the connection of soma with light made in the previous hymn (attributed to the same poet), IX.35.1, is also found here in verse 3. Also, every verse but the last contains a form derived from the root *pū* "purify," always pāda-initial.

1. He has been let loose like a chariot-horse into the filter, pressed into the two cups.
   The prizewinner has stepped upon the finish-line.
2. As wakeful draft-horse, o Soma, purify yourself, pursuing the gods, beyond (the filter),
   toward the cask dripping with honey.
3. O age-old self-purifying one, make the lights shine forth for us;
   impel us toward will, toward skill.
4. Being beautified by those who seek truth, being groomed in the two hands,
   he purifies himself in the sheep's fleece.
5. All goods for the pious man—heavenly, earthly, and those of the midspace—
   let Soma bring in purifying himself.
6. O Soma, you mount the back of heaven, seeking cows, seeking horses, seeking heroes, o lord of strength.

IX.37 (749) Soma Pavamāna

Rahūgaṇa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Several overt devices provide unity to this hymn: each verse begins with *sá* "he," and each verse but 4 contains a verb of motion ("rush, run, flow") expressing the journey of the soma through the filter and into the cups for Indra. In addition to the mundane details of the preparation, however, the hymn makes cosmic claims for the ritual actions. The sheep's fleece of verse 3 also stands for "the luminous realms of heaven"; in verse 5 Soma finds a wide realm, usually a symbol of freedom and the acquisition of territory.

Verse 4, the pause on the journey, has been much discussed, and its various phrases, "on the back of Trita," "along with (his) relatives," also given cosmic referents (though there is no scholarly agreement on just what they are). We are of the opinion, however, that it primarily concerns the ritual preparation: the "back of Trita" is the filter and the "relatives" (*jāmí*) are, as usual in a soma context, the fingers of the officiant, namely Trita (see "Trita's maidens," the fingers, in the next hymn, IX.38.2). It is this ritual preparation that allows the cosmic act of Soma, making the sun shine (at the Morning Pressing), in that same verse (4).

1. He, the bullish soma, pressed for drinking, rushes into the filter,
   smashing aside the demons, seeking the gods.
2. He, the tawny one, wide-gazing, rushes steadily into the filter,
   continually neighing toward his womb.

3. He, the prizewinner, self-purifying, runs through the luminous realms of heaven,
   through the sheep's fleece, as demon-smasher.
4. He, purifying himself on the back of Trita along with Trita's kin [=fingers],
   has made the sun shine.
5. He, the Vṛtra-smasher, the bull, finding the wide realm when pressed, undeceivable—
   Soma has flowed as if to a prize.
6. He, the god impelled by the poet, runs to the wooden cups—
   the drop with his munificence for Indra.

IX.38 (750) Soma Pavamāna

Rahūgaṇa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Like the previous hymn, attributed to the same poet, this hymn is unified by the repetition of a pronominal phrase at the beginning of every verse (*eṣá syá* "this very one," except for vs. 2, which has only the first pronoun). It, too, concerns Soma's journey through the filter (especially the first and last verses, 1 and 6) and his manipulation by the officiant's fingers (vss. 2, 3). The hymn is enlivened by metaphors and similes, particularly those of verse 4.

1. This very one, a bull, a chariot, rushes through the sheep's fleece,
   going to the thousandfold prize.
2. This tawny one do the maidens of Trita [=fingers] impel with the stones,
   the drop for Indra to drink.
3. This very one do the ten tawny ones keep grooming, hard at work,
   those by whom he is beautified for exhilaration.
4. This very one settles among the human clans like a falcon (on a nest),
   going like a swain to a maiden.
5. This very one, the exhilarating juice, looks down, the child of heaven,
   the drop who entered the fleece.
6. This very one, the tawny one pressed for drinking, rushes steadily,
   neighing toward his own dear womb.

IX.39 (751) Soma Pavamāna

Bṛhanmati Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is structured as a ring of sorts: it begins and ends with quoted direct speech, uttered by unidentified speakers but most likely priests. In verse 1 Soma makes his journey through the filter to the place on the ritual ground where the gods await their oblation. When he arrives there in verse 6, the priests order him to take his seat. In between, Soma's journey involves travel in both ritual and cosmic space (see esp. vss. 2, 4).

1. You of lofty thought, swiftly rush around through your dear domain,
   to where they will say "(here are) the gods."
2. Preparing what was not fully prepared, arranging the refreshments for the people,
   stream the rain from heaven all about.
3. Pressed, he goes into the filter, taking on vibrancy with his strength,
   gazing widely, producing wide illumination.
4. Here he is—the one with a rapid course who has flowed widely from heaven into the filter,
   into the swell of the river.
5. Seeking to lure from afar, and also from nearby, the pressed one
   is poured as honey for Indra.
6. United they have roared. They impel the tawny one with the stones,
   (saying,) "Sit in the womb of truth."

IX.40 (752) Soma Pavamāna

Bṛhanmati Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with a martial theme that is not developed in what follows. Instead, beginning with verse 3, the focus is on the wealth that Soma will bring us, and the repetition of vocabulary in these four verses induces a sense of claustrophobia, with the same elements recycled: "o Soma," "o drop," "purifying," "bring us," and "wealth." Although claustrophobia is to some extent endemic to the IXth Maṇḍala, most hymns make some attempt to vary the lexicon and phraseology.

1. Becoming purified, the limitless one has attacked all the scorners.
   They [=poets] beautify the inspired poet with their inspired thoughts.
2. The ruddy one has mounted to the womb; the bull, when pressed, will go to Indra.
   He sits in the steadfast seat.

3. Now for us, o drop, for us all all around, o Soma, attract great wealth in thousands, in purifying yourself.
4. O self-purifying Soma, o drop, bring all brilliant things hither;
   you will find refreshments in thousands.
5. Being purified, bring hither wealth and an abundance of heroes to our praise singer;
   strengthen the songs of the singer.
6. Being purified, o drop, bring hither double-lofty wealth—o Soma, bullish drop—bring us wealth worthy of hymns.

IX.41 (753) Soma Pavamāna

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn and the next two (IX.41–43) are attributed to Medhyātithi Kāṇva, the poet of several hymns in Maṇḍala VIII (VIII.1, 3, 33), who names himself in IX.43.3. This hymn begins strikingly, with an incomplete sentence describing the stampede of a wild mob, against the "black skin," presumably the Dasyu referred to in verse 2. The constituents of the mob are not identified, but are presumably the soma juices, here mobilized against the non-Ārya enemy. The second verse rewrites this scene more tranquilly, though with the victory over the Dasyu more explicit. But the violence of Soma's purificatory journey returns in verse 3.

The second half of the hymn is more conventional, though with Soma's cosmic associations clear in the last two verses (5–6).

1. Those who strode forth like cattle—frenzied, turbulent, unruly,
   smashing away the black skin [=Dasyus]—
2. We will bring to mind the easy passage (of Soma), beyond the snare difficult to navigate [=the curly fleece filter],
   we having overcome the Dasyu who follows no commandment.
3. A roar like that of rain is heard—the roar of the self-purifying tempestuous one.
   Lightning flashes roam in heaven.
4. O drop, in purifying yourself attract great refreshment and wealth in cattle, in gold,
   in horses, and in prizes, when you are pressed.
5. Purify yourself, limitless one. Fill the two great world-halves
   as Dawn does, as the sun does with its rays.
6. O Soma, flow for us in a protecting stream all around on all sides,
   like (the heavenly river) Rasā, along the upper surface (of the filter).

IX.42 (754) Soma Pavamāna

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

The double affiliation of Soma with the ritual and cosmic realms leads off the hymn: in verse 1 he performs major cosmogonic deeds while participating in his ritual preparation, mixing with milk and being washed in water. This twofold theme continues through the hymn, as, for example, in verse 4 where Soma begets the gods while being poured in the filter. The hymn ends (vs. 6) with a wish for the same material benefits found in the preceding hymn, IX.41.4.

1. Begetting the luminous realms of heaven, begetting the sun in the waters,
   clothing himself in cows, in the waters—the tawny one—
2. He, by means of an age-old thought, a god from among the gods,
   purifies himself in a stream, when pressed.
3. For the ever-increasing victor [=Indra] to win the prize, they purify
   themselves—
   the thousand-faceted soma juices.
4. Milking out his age-old milk, he is poured around into the filter.
   Roaring, he has begotten the gods.
5. Toward all desirable things, toward the gods who become strong through truth.
   Soma rushes while he is being purified.
6. O Soma, when you are pressed, bring us (wealth) in cattle, in heroes, in
   horses and prizes,
   and lofty refreshments in purifying yourself.

IX.43 (755) Soma Pavamāna

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

In this last hymn attributed to Medhyātithi, he is at particular pains to draw attention to the importance of the poet's role in the preparation of the soma. Not only does he name himself in verse 3, but the first three verses emphasize the clothing (vs. 1), beautification (vs. 2), and adornment (vs. 3) of Soma with hymns. In the final verse (6) he asks for a proper recompense for the poet (that is, himself) who produces these hymns.

1. The one who is groomed like a steed with cows [=milk], for exhilaration,
   the delightful one—
   him do we clothe with hymns.
2. Him do all our hymns, seeking aid, beautify in the ancient way—
   the drop for Indra to drink.
3. While being purified, he makes his journey—the delightful Soma,
   adorned with the hymns
   of the inspired poet Medhyātithi.
4. Self-purifying Soma, for us find very beautiful wealth
   of a thousand lusters, o drop.
5. The drop, like a steed running for the prize, keeps neighing in the filter,
   when he has overflowed it, in search of the gods.
6. Purify yourself for prizewinning, for the strengthening of the inspired
   poet who hymns you.
   Soma, give us an abundance of heroes.

IX.44 (756) Soma Pavamāna

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The poet of the next three hymns (IX.44–46) seems to owe his Anukramaṇī identification to the word *ayā́sya* "irrepressible" in the first verse of this first hymn, where it is applied to Soma. Insofar as there is a theme in this hymn, it is Soma's relation to the gods (vss. 1, 3, 5) and his intermediary role between the gods and us, especially us poets (vss. 2, 5).

1. O drop, you rush forth for our great extension, like (a river) bearing a wave,
   irrepressible, toward the gods.
2. Soma is impelled in the distance, delighted by the thought, impelled by
   the insight
   of the inspired poet—(Soma himself) a sage poet—in a stream.
3. This one, wakeful among the gods, goes pressed into the filter.
   Soma the limitless is making his journey.
4. Purify yourself for us, seeking prizes, making the dear ceremony your own.
   The one with the ritual grass [=priest] seeks to lure (you) here.
5. He whose heroes are poets, growing ever stronger for Bhaga, for Vāyu—
   Soma will guide us to the gods.
6. You who find the will, who best find the way—in order to give us goods today,
   win the prize and lofty praise.

IX.45 (757) Soma Pavamāna

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn is defined by a thematic ring: Soma has his gaze on men in verse 1 and in the final verse (6) he gazes out on the reward he gives to his human praiser. Soma,

as usual, goes on his purificatory journey through the filter (vss. 1–2) and is mixed with milk (vs. 3), but unlike many of the recent soma hymns, this one also focuses on the stage beyond the filter, with striking images in verses 4 and 5.

1. Having your gaze on men, purify yourself for exhilaration, for the pursuit of the gods,
   o drop, and for Indra to drink.
2. Rush on your mission for us—you spill out for Indra—
   rush to the gods for us, your comrades, at will.
3. And we anoint you, the ruddy one, with cows for exhilaration.
   Open up the doors for wealth for us.
4. He has stepped beyond the filter, like a prize-seeking (horse) the chariot-pole on its course.
   The drop plays the lord among the gods.
5. His comrades cried out in unison to him as he was playing in the wood(en vessel), beyond the sheep [=fleece].
   To the drop the roars have roared.
6. Purify yourself in that stream in which, once drunk, you will gaze out upon an abundance of heroes for your praiser, o drop.

IX.46 (758) Soma Pavamāna

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn surveys some familiar themes, particularly the role of the fingers in preparing the soma (vss. 4, 6), though it is perhaps noteworthy that the filter, so prominent in many soma hymns, is not explicitly present here. In contrast, some qualities of soma known from elsewhere that are rarely or never mentioned in the IXth Maṇḍala make their appearance—in particular his source in the mountains (vs. 1) and in verse 4 the technical distinction between "pure" (that is, unmixed) soma (*śukrá*) and soma with grain stirred in (*manthín*, a word otherwise only found once elsewhere in the Ṛgveda [III.32.2]). (In the later śrauta ritual, cups of *śukra* and *manthin* soma form both a ritual and a grammatical pair, in the dual dvandva compound *śukrā-manthinau*, here found in discontinuous form.) The gods Vāyu (vs. 2) and Indra (vss. 3, 6), recipients of the first soma oblations at the Morning Pressing, are named. Verse 2 contains a striking image of the soma drops adorned like a girl for marriage.

1. They have been released to pursue the gods, like steeds that get results, flowing, grown strong in the mountains.
2. The drops, adorned like a maiden with her patrimony,
   the soma drinks have been released to Vāyu.

3. These soma juices, the drops, dispensing delight when pressed in the cup, strengthen Indra along with the (ritual) activities.
4. Rinse it, you (fingers) of good hands; grasp the two (soma drinks), the stirred and the pure.
   Mix the exhilarating one with cows.
5. Purify yourself, you winner of stakes, as provider of great bounty and as pathfinder for us, o Soma.
6. The ten fingers groom this one worth grooming, the self-purifying exhilarating drink of exhilaration for Indra.

IX.47 (759) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: gāyatrī

The next three hymns (IX.47–49) are attributed to Kavi Bhārgava, to whom the Anukramaṇī also credits the five Jagatī hymns IX.75–79. The Soma of this hymn is distinctly militant, using the power he has acquired (vs. 1) to destroy the Dasyus (vs. 2) and win spoils, as Indra's very mace (vss. 3, 5). But the same Soma is both a poet (vs. 4) and a recipient of poetry (vs. 3), who facilitates the human poet's acquisition of treasure from his patron (vs. 4).

1. Through this good ritual performance Soma has waxed strong even over the great ones.
   Becoming exhilarated, he up and acts the bull.
2. His deeds done and to be done, crushing the Dasyus, are conspicuous, and the bold one exacts recompense for debts.
3. Then Soma, the sap destined for Indra, becomes a mace winning thousands,
   when a hymn is born for him.
4. Himself a sage poet, he seeks a treasure for the inspired poet at (the hands of) the distributor,
   as he keeps grooming his insightful thoughts.
5. Desirous of winning riches, as of winning chargers at prize-contests, you are among those who are victorious in the raids.

IX.48 (760) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: gāyatrī

The poet begins his hymn with a request for benefit, though a rather generic one (vs. 1). The militant theme of the previous hymn is visible in verse 2, while the story of the falcon's theft of Soma from heaven, a myth not prominent elsewhere in Maṇḍala IX, is the subject of verses 3–4. Unlike most of the gāyatrī soma hymns, this one contains no explicit reference to the preparation of the soma, with only a glancing mention of the "impelling" of soma in the final verse (5), a term generally used in IX of the push that starts the soma on its purificatory journey through the filter.

1. You who bear your manly powers among the seats of great heaven
   we implore for something dear through this good ritual performance—
2. You who have encoiled the bold and are worthy of hymns, having very
   great commandments, exhilarating,
   eager to break a hundred strongholds.
3. From there, from heaven, the unfaltering falcon brought
   you, the king, to wealth, o strong-willed one.
4. It was for everyone to see the sun that the bird brought you as one (to be)
   held in common,
   the herdsman of truth, crossing through the airy realm.
5. And now, being impelled, he has acquired more eminent greatness,
   appropriate to Indra,
   as the limitless creator of superiority.

IX.49 (761) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: gāyatrī

Each verse of this hymn contains a form (two in vs. 3) of the root *pū* "purify," all verbs except for the "filter" word (*pavítram*) in verse 4; the three middle verses (3–5) also all contain the instrumental *dhárayā* "in a stream." The hymn thus has a tight lexical structure, and the content is similarly limited, to wishes for rain as refreshment and nourishment (vss. 1, 3–4) and for increase in cattle (vs. 3). The first four verses contain imperatives addressed to Soma, the last verse a 3rd-person past tense, suggesting that the wishes expressed have been fulfilled.

1. Purify yourself, bringing rain to us, a wave of waters from heaven,
   lofty refreshments free from disease.
2. Purify yourself in that stream by which the people's cows
   will come here, right up to our house.

3. Purify yourself in a stream as ghee, you who best pursue the gods at the
   sacrifices;
   for us bring rain through purification.
4. For our nourishment run through the fleecy filter in a stream,
   for the gods will surely listen!
5. Purifying himself, he has flowed, constantly smashing away demons,
   making the lights light up as of old.

IX.50 (762) Soma Pavamāna

Ucathya Āṅgirasa
5 verses: gāyatrī

The next three hymns (IX.50–52) are attributed to the same poet, who is not otherwise found in the Ṛgveda. This hymn has a distinct focus on sound, that of Soma as he is being prepared (vs. 1), of (probably) the officiating priests (vs. 3), and of the ritual chant (vs. 4). A potential pun in verse 2 suggests that the priestly voices there are both competing with each other and seeking the sacrificial reward. Verse 5 contains another potential pun, with the same word (*aktú*) meaning both "ointments" and "nights."

1. Your snortings rise up like the roar of the wave of a river.
   Spur on the wheel-rim of the music.
2. At your stimulus there rise up three voices ready for combat [/seeking
   bounty],
   when you go onto the back of the sheep.
3. On the sheep's fleece with stones they drive the dear tawny one around,
   purifying himself, dripping with honey.
4. Purify yourself in a stream in the filter, you most exhilarating poet,
   to sit in the womb of chant.
5. Purify yourself, most exhilarating one, being anointed with cows as
   ointments [/through the nights],
   o drop, for Indra to drink.

IX.51 (763) Soma Pavamāna

Ucathya Āṅgirasa
5 verses: gāyatrī

This simple hymn sets Soma in relation both to the humans involved in his preparation, namely the Adhvaryu priest (vs. 1) and the praiser (vs. 4), and to the gods who consume him, Indra (vss. 1–2), the gods in general, and the Maruts (vs. 3). The entry into the filter, mentioned in verses 1 and 5, provides an elementary ring.

1. O Adhvaryu, send the soma, pressed by stones, surging into the filter.
   Purify it for Indra to drink.
2. The highest beestings of heaven, the most honeyed soma—
   press it for Indra who bears the mace.
3. Of your stalk, of your honey, o drop, do these gods eat;
   of you, the self-purifying one, do the Maruts.
4. For you, Soma, are strengthening when you are pressed for fervent exhilaration,
   to help the praiser, you bull.
5. O wide-gazing one, pressed in a stream, rush into the filter
   to the prize of victory and to fame.

IX.52 (764) Soma Pavamāna

Ucathya Āṅgirasa
5 verses: gāyatrī

Unlike the very straightforward preceding hymn (IX.51) attributed to the same poet, this one is full of tricks, especially in the middle verse (3), which can thus be viewed as an omphalos. The contents of the first two verses are conventional enough—the entry of Soma into the filter—but they contain several instances of phonological and morphological play, as do the final two verses (4–5). These cannot be conveyed in translation.

Verse 3, characterized by the repetition of the verb *tṅkhaya* ("push, shove") of highly marked formation, has a slangy and disparaging tone. Its object is generally interpreted, in our opinion correctly, as a reference to an ungenerous rich man, perhaps the poet's patron. He is compared to a pot, no doubt both because he is full of goods and because of his stodgy demeanor, and the soma drop is urged to prod this miser into giving.

Two matching compounds, *sanád-rayiḥ* "gaining wealth" (vs. 1) and *maṃhayád-rayiḥ* "readying wealth" (vs. 5), provide a thematic and grammatical ring.

1. Heaven-ruling, gaining wealth, bringing a prize to us with your stalk,
   being pressed, rush around into the filter.
2. Along your age-old routes, around onto the sheep's fleece, the dear one
   drives, a thousand streams in extent.
3. The one who is like a pot, give him a shove; give a shove to the one who doesn't give on his own, o drop.
   Give him a shove with your strokes, you striker.
4. (Strike) down the bluster of those people, o much-invoked drop,
   of anyone who takes aim at us.
5. With a hundred forms of help for us, o drop, or with a thousand gleaming (soma drinks),
   purify yourself, readying wealth.

IX.53 (765) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verse: gāyatrī

The next eight hymns (IX.53–60) are attributed to the same poet as V.44, a hymn to the All Gods often declared to be the hardest hymn in the Ṛgveda. Although these brief soma hymns have some interesting features, they lack the mind-boggling verbal pyrotechnics of that hymn.

On the other hand, the organizing principle of V.44 is the double application of each verse to two different divinities, Agni and Soma, with a lexicon ambiguous enough to allow both interpretations. Something of the same thing is visible in this hymn, in which each verse but the last (4) invites the audience to supply a referent different from the one meant. The first verse deploys clear Indraic vocabulary, particularly the vocative "possessor of the stone," though Soma can, and should, be its subject. The first two-thirds of the second verse (2ab) suggest either Indra or Soma as referent, until the 1st singular verb form "I will praise" that opens the last pāda establishes the 1st-person speaker as the referent. Again, the third verse opens like a verse to Varuṇa or another Āditya, and only the "self-purifying" that begins the second pāda ties it to Soma. It is only the last verse that contains unmistakable somian vocabulary and which, in its final pāda, clarifies the roles of the drop (*índu*) and Indra.

1. Your blasts have arisen, splitting the demonic power, you possessor of the stone.
   Push aside the challengers all around
2. With this (insightful thought), slamming down with strength when chariots clash and a prize is set,
   I will praise with fearless heart.
3. The commandments of this self-purifying one cannot be ventured against by one of bad insight.
   Break the one who battles you.
4. Into the rivers they impel him who arouses exhilaration, the tawny one who seeks the prize,
   the drop exhilarating to Indra.

IX.54 (766) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

Like the last hymn, this one withholds unambiguous identification until the end of the hymn, while employing suggestive vocabulary in the earlier verses. However, unlike the last hymn, the poet does not try to mislead the audience into supplying

the "wrong" referent. Rather, the hymn is structured as a series of explicit riddles: a form of the pronoun *ayám* "this one" opens each of the first three verses (and also 2b), and what is predicated of "this one" fits, or can fit, the Soma paradigm. The explicit solution to the riddle is given in the last pāda of verse 3, with the name Soma prominently situated. And the final verse brings the drop (*índu*) and Indra together in the same way as IX.53.4.

1. In accord with the age-old brilliance of this one, they have milked the
   gleaming, immoderate
   milk from the seer who wins thousands.
2. This one is a sight like the sun; this one runs to the lakes,
   along the seven slopes, to heaven.
3. This one, being purified, stands above all beings
   like the Sun-god: he is Soma.
4. To pursue the gods for us, you rush around the prizes consisting of cows,
   being purified, o drop, seeking Indra.

IX.55 (767) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

The first three verses of the hymn are unified by a reference to the stalk (*ándhas*) of the soma plant, although the role of the stalk is somewhat vague. Verse 1 is notable for its mention of agriculture, though again the relevance is not entirely clear. The martial Soma is on display in verse 4.

1. Stream around to us grain upon grain, fruiting upon fruiting with your stalk,
   o Soma, and all the gifts of good fortune.
2. O drop, just as there is praise of you (now), just as (the honey) has been
   born from your stalk,
   (so) sit down on the dear ritual grass.
3. And as cow-finder for us, horse-finder, purify yourself, Soma, with your stalk
   through the days soonest to come.
4. Who conquers and is not conquered, who smashes his rival on just
   confronting him—
   as such a one, purify yourself, o winner of thousands.

IX.56 (768) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

The first three verses of this simple hymn describe Soma's journey in the filter (vs. 1), as the liquid separates into multiple streams in the channels of the fleece (vs. 2), and his preparation by the fingers (vs. 3). The fourth verse then requests protection for ourselves and our men, while urging the soma to flow for its divine recipients.

1. Swift Soma, as lofty truth, rushes about in the filter,
   smashing apart the demons, seeking the gods,
2. When Soma rushes toward the prize, as a hundred hardworking streams,
   entering fellowship with Indra.
3. The ten young women have cried out to you, like a maiden to her lover.
   You are groomed, o Soma, for winning.
4. You, o drop, the sweet one—flow around for Indra, for Viṣṇu.
   Protect the superior men, the praisers from difficult straits.

IX.57 (769) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

In this little hymn, Soma is explicitly or implicitly compared to rain (vs. 1), a warrior (vs. 2), a law-abiding king or his subject (vs. 3), and a falcon in its nest (vs. 3). The ambiguity of the term "keeping his commandments well, having good commandments" in verse 3 allows the description to apply either to the imposer of the commandments, the king, or to those who abide by them, the vassals. The final verse (4) is, as so often, the locus of our requests.

1. Your streams go forth inexhaustible, like rains from heaven,
   to the thousandfold prize.
2. Toward the dear (products of) poetic skill, observing all does he rush,
   the tawny one brandishing his weapons.
3. Constantly being groomed by the Āyus, keeping his commandments like
   a vassal (or) a king,
   like a falcon he sits in the wood(en vessel)s.
4. All goods from heaven and from the earth
   bring hither to us, while being purified, o drop.

IX.58 (770) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

A curious little hymn or hymn-fragment. All four verses have a pāda-length refrain, which is entirely applicable to Soma, and the hymn begins with this same refrain. The first verse is clearly a soma verse throughout, but verse 2 is more appropriate to Dawn and verses 3 and 4 appear to be an abbreviated dānastuti. The patrons named in verse 3 are identified as protegés of the Aśvins in I.112.23 (though with the first in slightly different form); middle Vedic literature also has a confused tradition about these same personages.

1. In crossing, the invigorating one runs, the stream of the pressed stalk.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.
2. The ruddy goddess knows of the goods, of the help of the mortal.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.
3. At (the hands of) Dhvasra and Puruṣanti we take thousands.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.
4. At (the hands of) those two we take thirty and thousands in extent.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.

IX.59 (771) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

Each of the four verses contains at least one form of "purify oneself/self-purifying," with three such imperatives in verse 2. That verse seems to contain a trio of elemental substances, which are also connected with the ritual: waters, plants, and, in our interpretation, the hearths as holy places, representative of fire. Soma as finder of good things for us provides a thematic ring for the hymn; in verse 1 he finds the material and psychological goods men desire, while in verse 4 he has raised the stakes to the cosmic level.

1. Purify yourself, Soma, as cow-winner, horse-winner, all-winner,
   joy-winner.
   Bring here a treasure consisting of offspring.
2. Purify yourself undeceivable for the waters; purify yourself for the plants;
   purify yourself for the Holy Places.
3. Purifying yourself, Soma, cross all difficult passages.
   As poet sit down on the ritual grass.
4. Self-purifying one, you find the sun; on just being born, you became great.
   Drop, you dominate all.

IX.60 (772) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

A satisfyingly tight structure knits together this little hymn. The first and last verses contain the epithet "boundless" (*vícarṣaṇi*) providing a faint ring. More salient is the chaining from verse to verse: a significant portion of the final pāda of one verse opens the next verse.

The hymn also has extra-hymnic structural echoes: its final pāda is identical to the final pāda of the first verse of the preceding hymn (IX.59.1), ascribed to the same poet, save for "semen" in place of "treasure."

1. Sing forth with a song to the boundless self-purifying one,
   the drop with a thousand eyes.
2. You, possessing a thousand eyes and bringing a thousand presents,
   they have purified across the fleece.
3. Across the fleeces the self-purifying one has streamed. He runs into the tubs,
   entering the heart of Indra.
4. For the generosity of Indra, purify yourself as luck, o boundless Soma.
   Bring here semen providing offspring.

IX.61 (773) Soma Pavamāna

Amahīyu Āṅgirasa
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

The first sixty hymns of the Soma Maṇḍala, all in gāyatrī meter, are arranged in the normal order of descending number of verses, starting with hymns of ten verses and ending with those of four. (The only exception is the Āprī hymn, IX.5, which has eleven.) But the gāyatrī sequence ends with six thirty-verse hymns (IX.61–66), followed by one with thirty-two verses (IX.67)—all arranged in tṛcas (the final two verses in IX.67 are supplements) and each attributed to a different poet or group of poets—before the jagatī group begins. It is probably not an accident that these groupings of tṛcas come at the end of the gāyatrī sequence, since, as agglomerations of three-verse sequences, they logically follow the four-verse hymns.

In this particular hymn there is little evidence of unity either within tṛcas or between them: the standard topics of soma hymns—the details of preparation (e.g., vss. 4–5) and the gods for whom he's prepared (e.g., vss. 8–9), the cosmic connections of Soma (e.g., vss. 10, 16, 18), and the largesse and aid we ask him for (e.g., vss. 3, 23–24)—are strung together in no apparent order. There is a discernible tendency, however, to emphasize Soma's role in combating hostile forces, either directly or by strengthening someone else to do so, especially Indra. The hymn begins with two verses mentioning some of Indra's exploits performed under the influence of Soma, though without

naming Indra, and the theme of Soma the smiter and aggressive warrior returns toward the end of the hymn and dominates the last two tṛcas (vss. 19–20, 22, 24–30).

1. Flow around in pursuit (of him) who amid your raptures, o drop,
   smashed down the nine and ninety—
2. (Smashed down) the strongholds in one day for the one whose thought
   is to the point, (smashed down) Śambara for Divodāsa,
   and as for that Turvaśa and Yadu....
3. Stream around to us horseflesh, as horse-finder, and (wealth) in cattle
   and gold, o drop,
   and thousandfold refreshments.

4. While you are purifying yourself, while you are flooding the filter, we
   choose your companionship.
5. Your waves that flow into the filter in a stream—
   with them be gracious to us, Soma.
6. Being purified, bring us wealth and refreshment consisting of heroes,
   while you hold sway everywhere, o Soma.

7. Just him do the ten fingers groom, him whose mother is the river(s).
   He has been reckoned among the Ādityas.
8. Pressed, he goes into the filter, uniting with Indra and Vāyu,
   uniting with the rays of the sun.
9. Purify yourself for us, honeyed for Bhaga, for Vāyu, for Pūṣan,
   dear to Mitra and Varuṇa.

10. It was born high above from your stalk; though it was in heaven, on
    earth it took for itself
    mighty shelter and great fame.
11. Seeking to gain all the brilliant things of humans from the stranger,
    with it we shall win them.
12. Flow around for worshipful Indra, for Varuṇa, for the Maruts,
    finding a wide realm for us.

13. Up to the one who, just born, crosses the waters, breaking through,
    adorned by cows—
    up to the drop have the gods traveled.
14. Only him let our hymns strengthen, as (cows) who share their young do a calf—
    him who gains the heart of Indra.
15. Rush as weal for our cow, Soma; milk out swelling refreshment.
    Increase the sea, worthy of hymns.

16. Purifying himself he has begotten thunder dazzling like that of heaven
    and the lofty light belonging to all men.
17. When you are purifying yourself, o king, your sap, the exhilarating
    drink that brings no misfortune,
    rushes through the sheep's fleece.
18. Self-purifying one, your potent sap shines forth brilliant,
    as light for everyone to see the sun.

19. Your exhilarating drink that is worthy to be chosen, with that stalk
    purify yourself,
    pursuing the gods, smashing those who utter evil.
20. Smashing Vṛtra the hostile, winning the prize every day,
    you are a winner of cows and of horses.
21. Become a ruddy (bull) mingling with milk-cows as if with (ladies) with
    lovely laps,
    sitting like a falcon on your womb.

22. Purify yourself, you who helped Indra to smash Vṛtra,
    who was obstructing the great waters.
23. Might we of good heroes win the stakes, o Soma the rewarder.
    Becoming purified, strengthen our hymns.
24. Aided by you, with your help, might we be combative against
    hindrances.
    O Soma, be watchful over the commandments.

25. Smashing away the scorners, away the ungenerous, Soma purifies himself,
    going to the rendezvous with Indra.
26. Bring great wealth here to us, self-purifying one; smash the scorners.
    Give glory in heroes, o drop.
27. A hundred crooks [/wool tufts] will never confound you when you are
    eager to give largesse,
    when you, becoming purified, do battle [/act bounteously].

28. Purify yourself, o drop, when you, the bull, are pressed. Make us
    glorious among the people.
    Smash away all hatreds.
29. In the companionship of you here, in your highest brilliance, o drop, might we
    overcome those who do battle.
30. Your fearful sharp weapons, which exist to injure,
    (with them) guard us from the insult of anyone at all.

IX.62 (774) Soma Pavamāna

Jamadagni Bhārgava
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Though long, this hymn remains focused on the familiar details of the preparation of the soma, often ennobled by establishing cosmic parallels. The journey across

the fleece is especially prominent, and the soma is frequently likened to a fast horse. One verse, 17, is more specific than the usual generic treatments: here the soma is a horse yoked to the chariot of the sacrifice, which has three backs and three seats, presumably the three pressings and the three fires, by the visionary thoughts of the seven seers. It is also notable how often Soma is called a poet or connected with poetry in the second part of this hymn (vss. 13, 14, 25, 26, 27, 30). In the final verse he is in fact called "the entruthed poet" or "the poet (who is) truth (itself)," a powerful expression of his relationship to creative speech.

Though some of the tṛcas display internal formal unity (e.g., vss. 19–21 beginning with *ā́*), most do not. The poet to whom the hymn is attributed names himself in verse 24.

1. These drops have surged, swift across the filter,
toward all gifts of good fortune.
2. The prize-seekers, smashing apart the many obstacles to progress,
making the ways easy going for our offspring
and for our steed by their own extension,
3. Making a wide realm for the cow, they rush toward the lovely
praise hymn,
toward lasting refreshment for us.

4. The plant has been pressed in the waters for exhilaration, the potent
one abiding on a mountain.
Like a falcon he has sat on his womb.
5. The beautiful stalk coveted by the gods—(the soma) rinsed in the
waters, pressed by men—
do the cows sweeten with their milk.
6. Then, like drivers a horse, they have beautified him for the immortal,
the sap of honey for joint revelry.

7. Your streams, dripping with honey, which have surged for our aid,
o drop,
with them you have sat down on the filter.
8. Rush, for Indra to drink, across the sheep's fleece,
sitting on your womb, in the wooden (vessels).
9. You, o drop, stream around—sweetest for the Aṅgirases,
finding a wide realm—to the ghee, the milk.

10. Here has the limitless one been established; purifying himself, he takes
note of
lofty friendship while being impelled.
11. This bull following his bullish commandments, purifying himself,
smashing malediction,
will provide goods for the pious.

12. In purifying yourself bring wealth in thousands of cows and of horses,
much gleaming, much craved.

13. This one here is poured in circles, being continually groomed by
the Āyus,
the wide-going one with a poet's purpose.
14. Possessing a thousand forms of help, a hundred bounties, measurer of
the airy realm, poet—
the exhilarating drink purifies himself for Indra.
15. Born on a mountain [/begotten by a hymn], praised here, the drop is
placed for Indra,
a bird in his womb, as if in a nest.

16. Purifying himself, pressed by men, Soma has flowed, as if to a prize,
to sit in the cups, through his mastery.
17. They yoke him to the three-backed, three-seated chariot, to drive,
yoking him by means of the seven visionary thoughts of the seven seers.
18. O pressers, impel the swift one to drive for the prize—the winner of spoils,
the tawny prize-seeker.

19. Pressed, entering the tub, rushing to all that is glorious,
he stands among the cows like a champion.
20. The Āyus milk your milk for exhilaration, o drop;
the gods (milk) honey for the gods.
21. Into the filter send our soma, the most honeyed
for the gods, the most audible to the gods.

22. These soma juices, while being hymned, have surged for great fame
in a stream of most exhilarating (soma).
23. You rush to pursue bovine (goods) and manly powers, while being
purified.
Winning the prizes, flow around.
24. And rush to all our refreshments provided with cows, encircled with
rhythm,
while being hymned by Jamadagni.

25. Purify yourself, Soma, with your bright help, going at the forefront
of speech
toward all products of poetic skill.
26. You—going at the forefront, rousing the waters of the sea and the
speeches—
purify yourself, o you who set everything in motion.
27. For you, o poet, do these worlds here take their stand, for your
greatness, o Soma;
for you do the rivers rush.

28. Like rains from heaven your streams go forth inexhaustible,
toward the gleaming underlayer.
29. For Indra purify the drop, the strong one bringing success to skill,
the lord whose largesse is worth pursuing.
30. Self-purifying Soma, the entruthed poet, has sat in the filter,
establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.

IX.63 (775) Soma Pavamāna

Nidhruvi Kāśyapa
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Like the last hymn, this one is much concerned with the ritual preparation of soma, but it sketches a larger conceptual world in which this preparation takes place. On the one hand, the purification is seen as a process of Ārya-ization (vs. 5), and the spaces that Soma traverses, for example the filter, become "Ārya domains" (vs. 14). The waters that Soma crosses (vss. 5, 21) and the rivers in which he is groomed (vs. 17) are both the ritual waters in which the soma plant is rinsed and rehydrated and, metaphorically, the frontier rivers the Āryas crossed in expanding their realms. (See also the mentions of finding or making "wide space" in the two preceding hymns [IX.61.12; 62.3, 9].)

On the other hand, Soma is compared to and identified with the Sun (especially in the third tṛca, vss. 7–9, also vs. 13), and his journey across the filter is also metaphorically the Sun's daily journey across the heaven. Since the ritual activity happens on earth, at the hands of Manu (vss. 7–8), the first sacrificer and the cultural ancestor of the Ārya, even the rising of the Sun is thus implicitly attributed to human agency.

The hymn is, of course, also full of requests for material goods of all sorts, and, especially toward the end, for Soma to smite all manner of enemies and hostile forces (vss. 24, 26, 28–29; also 5).

Although the hymn does not seem tightly structured, some tṛcas show formal unity (e.g., vss. 25–27 with forms of the root *sṛj* "surge"), and the hymn begins and ends with verses containing the imperative *dhāraya* "secure, sustain."

1. In purifying yourself, o Soma, bring wealth in thousands and an
abundance of good heroes;
secure our claims to fame for us.
2. You swell refreshment and nourishment; most exhilarating for Indra,
you sit down here in the cups.
3. Pressed for Indra, for Viṣṇu, soma has streamed into the tub.
Let it be honeyed for Vāyu.

4. These swift brown ones have surged across the tangles (of sheep's wool),
the soma juices, in a stream of truth.

5. Strengthening Indra, crossing the waters, making it all Ārya,
smashing away the non-givers,
6. The pressed juices rush along their own realm, the brown ones,
the drops, going to Indra.

7. Purify yourself in the very stream with which you made the sun shine,
impelling the waters belonging to Manu.
8. He has yoked Etaśa, (the steed) of the Sun, purifying himself in Manu's
presence,
to drive through the midspace.
9. And these ten tawny mares of the Sun he has yoked, to drive,
the drop, announcing, "(I go) to Indra."

10. From here sprinkle in circles the soma pressed for Vāyu, the songs, (the
soma) exhilarating to Indra,
onto the sheep's fleece.
11. O self-purifying Soma, find wealth for us that is difficult to surpass,
that is difficult to attain by one who craves it.
12. Rush toward wealth in thousands of cows and of horses,
toward the prize of victory and fame.

13. Soma, like the Sun-god, purifies himself, pressed by stones,
placing his own sap in the tub.
14. Across the Ārya domains these clear juices in a stream of truth
have flowed to a prize of cows.
15. Pressed for Indra the mace-bearer, the soma juices, mixed with curds,
have streamed across the filter.

16. O Soma, as the most honeyed, rush forth into the filter for wealth,
as the exhilarating drink that best pursues the gods.
17. Him do the Āyus groom in the rivers, the tawny prize-seeker,
the drop exhilarating to Indra.
18. In purifying yourself, o Soma, bring masses of gold, of horses, of
heroes;
bring hither a prize of cows.

19. As if sprinkling a prize-seeking (horse) when the prize (is set), sprinkle
prize-seeking (soma) in circles onto the sheep's fleece,
(the soma) most honeyed for Indra.
20. The inspired poets, seeking help, with their insights groom the sage poet
worthy to be groomed.
The bull rushes ever roaring.
21. To the water-crossing bull, Soma, in a stream of truth
have the inspired poets cried out in unison with their insights, their
thought.

22. Purify yourself, o god, attended by the Āyus. Let your exhilarating
drink go to Indra;
mount to Vāyu according to the (ritual) statute.
23. O self-purifying Soma, you spill down wealth worthy of fame.
As dear one, enter the sea.
24. Smashing away the scorners, you purify yourself, finding the resolve,
exhilarating, o Soma.
Thrust from yourself the people who do not seek the gods.

25. The self-purifying soma juices, the clear drops have surged
toward all products of poetic skill.
26. The swift, resplendent, self-purifying drops have surged,
smashing away all hatreds.
27. The self-purifying ones have surged from the heaven, from the midspace
onto the back of the earth.

28. Becoming purified in a stream, o Soma drop, smash away all errors,
away the demonic forces, o you of good resolve.
29. Smashing away demons, Soma, rush ever roaring
toward highest brilliant tempestuousness.
30. In us, o Soma drop, secure goods—heavenly, earthly,
all that are choice.

IX.64 (776) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

The hymn begins with an insistent tṛca establishing Soma as a bull. What follows is for the most part a conventional treatment of the purification process, with special emphasis on his entry into "the sea" (that is, the purificatory waters, vss. 8, 16, 17, 19, 27). The association with the Sun found in the preceding hymn is also present here, with Soma not merely yoking the Sun's horse, Etaśa, but identified with him (vs. 19) and with the Sun himself in the final words of the hymn (vs. 30; see also vss. 7, 9). Soma's light and brilliance are also mentioned throughout (vss. 1, 8, 13, 15, 28).

1. A bull are you, Soma, a brilliant one—a bull following his bullish
commandments, o god.
As bull, you have established your own foundations.
2. Of you, the bull, bullish is the strength; your wooden (cup) is a bull, your
exhilarating drink a bull.
In truth, o bull, you are really a bull.

3. You, the bull, whinny like a horse. Sur(round) the cows, sur(round) the
steeds, o drop;
open up the doors for wealth for us.

4. They have surged forth—the prize-seeking soma juices—with a yen for
cows and for horses,
with a yen for heroes—the swift clear ones.
5. Being beautified by those who seek truth, being groomed in the two hands,
they purify themselves in the sheep's fleece.
6. All goods for the pious—heavenly, earthly, and those of the midspace—
let these soma juices bring in purifying themselves.

7. O you who find [/know] all, of you purifying yourself the surges have
surged forth,
like the rays of the sun.
8. Making a beacon, from heaven you rush toward all forms.
O Soma, you swell as the sea.
9. Yourself being impelled, you send out your speech, you who purify
yourself at your expansion.
You have roared like the Sun-god.

10. The drop has become purified, the conspicuous dear one, by the
thought of the poets.
Like a charioteer his horse, it has released (its wave),
11. Your wave which, pursuing the gods, has streamed around in the filter,
sitting on the womb of truth.
12. Rush into our filter, as the exhilarating drink that best pursues the gods,
o drop, for Indra to drink.

13. For refreshment purify yourself in a stream, being groomed by the
inspired ones.
O drop, with your light come toward the cows.
14. Becoming purified, make wide space and nourishment for the people, o
you who long for song,
when you are released into the milk-mixture, o tawny one.
15. Becoming purified for the pursuit of the gods, drive to your rendezvous
with Indra,
flashing, guided by the prize-seekers.

16. Being impelled forth, the swift drops,
sped by insightful thought, have surged to the sea.
17. Continually being groomed, the lively drops
have come at will to the sea, to the womb of truth.
18. Inclined toward us, encompass for us all goods with your strength.
Protect for us a shelter full of heroes.

19. Etaśa the draft-horse measures out his pace, being yoked by the versifiers,
when he is deposited in the sea.
20. When the swift one sits on the golden womb of truth,
he leaves behind the undiscerning.
21. The seekers have cried out to (him); the discerning wish to attain (him).
The undiscriminating sink down.

22. For Indra with the Maruts, o drop, purify yourself as the most honeyed,
to sit on the womb of truth.
23. The inspired poets knowing [/finding] speech, the ritual adepts, adorn you;
the Āyus groom you all over.
24. Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa drink your sap, o poet,
as do the Maruts, when you purify yourself.

25. You, Soma, while becoming purified, send out speech that is attentive to poetic inspiration
and brings a thousand presents, o drop.
26. And speech bringing a thousand presents, ready for combat [/bounty], o Soma—
becoming purified, o drop, bring that hither.
27. Becoming purified, o drop, much invoked by these peoples,
as dear one, enter the sea.

28. (Provided) with ever-flashing light, with a form that encircles with chant
are (both) the clear soma drinks and those mixed with cows [=milk].
29. Being impelled, guided by the impellers, the prize-seeker has stridden to the prize—
sitting (on the womb of truth) like raptor(-birds).
30. Separately [=unmixed], o Soma, and uniting (with milk), as poet of heaven
purify yourself for well-being and as the sun to be seen.

IX.65 (777) Soma Pavamāna

Bhṛgu Vāruṇi or Jamadagni Bhārgava
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Even in this maṇḍala devoted to "self-purifying" Soma, the constant repetition of that epithet and its associated verbal forms ("purify yourself," etc.) in this hymn is remarkable. In particular, the idiom "by purifying yourself bring here..." (much more economically expressed in Sanskrit by *ā́ pavasva*) is insistent, along with other demands that Soma bring or convey goods here. Intermingled are verses treating the familiar details of soma preparation. All in all, the hymn seems flat, uninspired, and repetitive.

The tṛca consisting of verses 22–24 breaks the monotony to some degree, with the first two verses listing various places where the soma may be pressed (the meaning of some of these words is disputed and their translation provisional), and only the third returning to the dominant theme of the hymn. The final tṛca (vss. 28–30) brings the hymn to a close with a flurry of repetitions of the preverb *ā́* "here, hither," in a list of items we wish to bring to hand as a result of the soma offering.

1. The rosy (fingers) impel the sun; the kindred sisters impel their lord;
those seeking the great impel the great drop.
2. O self-purifying one, with light after light, as god from among the gods,
enter all good things.
3. O self-purifying one, by purifying yourself bring here good praise, rain, and friendship from the gods,
continuously for refreshment.

4. Because you are a bull, we, very attentive, invoke you who are brilliant with radiance,
o self-purifying one.
5. By purifying yourself bring here an abundance of heroes, you yourself becoming exhilarated, o you of good weapons.
Come just here, o drop.
6. When you are poured all around with waters, being groomed in the two hands,
you attain to your seat by means of the wooden (vessel).

7. Sing forth to self-purifying Soma, as Vyaśva did—
to the great one with a thousand eyes—
8. Him whose tawny hue, dripping with honey, they impel (like) a fallow bay with the stones,
the drop for Indra to drink,
9. It's with you—that prize-seeker who has won all the stakes—
that we choose partnership.

10. As bull purify yourself in a stream, and as exhilarating drink for the one accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra],
making all things your own by your strength.
11. You, o self-purifying one, who look like the sun, the upholder of (Indra's?) two arms,
do I impel—the prize-seeker to the prizes.
12. Conspicuous because of this poetic inspiration, purify yourself as tawny one in this very stream.
Spur on your yokemate to the prizes.

13. By purifying yourself bring great refreshment here for us, o drop visible to all,
finding the way for us, o Soma.
14. The tubs have cried out, o drop. In streams, with strength,
enter (them) for Indra's drinking.
15. You, whose exhilarating, sharp sap they milk out with stones—
purify yourself as smasher of hostility.

16. The king is sped by (words of) wisdom, purifying himself in Manu's presence,
to drive through the midspace.
17. Convey to us here, o drop, hundredfold thriving of cattle, an abundance of horses,
and the gift of good fortune, for aid.
18. Bring to us here, o Soma, strength and speed, as if in physical form, for luster,
when you have been pressed to seek the gods.

19. Rush, o Soma, most brilliant, to the wooden vessels, constantly bellowing,
sitting like a falcon in your womb.
20. For Indra, for Vāyu, for Varuṇa, for the Maruts, for Viṣṇu
the water-winning soma rushes.
21. Establishing refreshment for our offspring and for us on all sides, o Soma,
by purifying yourself bring thousandfold (wealth) here.

22. The soma juices that have been pressed in the distance, those nearby,
or those yonder in a reed-filled (lake),
23. Those (pressed) in foamy (places) among performers (of rituals), those in the middle of dwelling places,
or those among the five peoples,
24. By purifying themselves, let them bring here to us rain from heaven and an abundance of heroes—
the gods, the drops, being pressed.

25. He purifies himself, the delightful tawny one, while being hymned by Jamadagni
and being impelled onto the hide of the cow.
26. Forth (go) the clear (soma juices), speeding with vigor, being impelled like teams.
Being brought to readiness, they are groomed in the waters.
27. Those present at the pressings have impelled you for the sake of the divine conclave.
Purify yourself with this light.

28. Here your skill, which is joy itself, we choose today, here (you as) draft-animal,
here the much coveted drink,
29. Here the gladdening (drink), here the one worthy to be chosen, here the inspired poet, here the inspirited one,
here the much coveted drink,
30. Here wealth, here kind attention, here, o strong-willed one, right here on our bodies,
here the much coveted drink.

IX.66 (778) Soma Pavamāna, except Agni 19–21

One hundred Vaikhānasa poets
30 verses: gāyatrī (except anuṣṭubh 18), arranged in tṛcas

This hymn sets larger rhetorical goals for itself than the last one and inhabits a less airless rhetorical space. Indeed, the hymn is in part *about* space: the constricted area in which the soma is prepared and the materials employed in the preparation are likened to various cosmic domains and natural phenomena (see, e.g., vss. 2–3, 5–6, 12–13). Soma himself is explicitly or implicitly identified with other deities and natural forces, and they with him: the sun (vss. 18, 22, 27), probably Indra (vs. 26), and especially Agni (vss. 19–21). This last identification is so complete that the Anukramaṇī identifies Agni as the divinity of this tṛca—not surprisingly, as it begins (vs. 19) with an address to Agni, who is assigned the archetypal Soma epithet "self-purifying" (vs. 20, with verbal forms in vss. 19 and 21), while also keeping his own characteristic vocabulary (esp. "installed in front" [*puróhita*] vs. 20).

The poet also seeks comradeship with Soma (vss. 1, 4, 14, 18), in addition to the usual good things.

From an Indo-European perspective, the hymn is notable for containing one of three Ṛgvedic occurrences of the famous phrase *ákṣiti śrávaḥ* "imperishable fame," cognate with Greek *kléos áphthiton* "idem," and the formula, identified by Adelbert Kuhn in 1853, that launched the field of comparative Indo-European poetics.

1. Purify yourself, you who are common to all the separate peoples,
(surging) toward all products of poetic skill,
a comrade for your comrades, to be reverently invoked.
2. From those two you rule over all, self-purifying one—from the two domains [=Heaven and Earth]
that stand facing (each other), o Soma.
3. The domains that are yours, Soma, you surround entirely
according to the ritual sequences, o self-purifying poet.

4. Purify yourself, begetting refreshments, (surging) toward all valuables,
as a comrade to aid your comrades.
5. Yours are the gleaming rays that spread widely on the back of heaven
across the filter, Soma, through your domains.
6. Yours are these seven streams that flow forth to your command, Soma.
For you do the milk-cows run.

7. Drive forth, Soma, in a stream, pressed as exhilarating for Indra,
establishing for yourself imperishable fame.
8. Together the seven siblings cried out to you, inciting with insightful
thoughts
the inspired poet at the contest of Vivasvant.
9. They groom you together, the unwed ones, on the sheep's *back, in the
lively (water),
when, hoarse-voiced [/creaking], you are anointed [/greased] in the
wood(en cup).

10. Of you purifying yourself, o poet and prizewinner, the surges have surged,
like chargers seeking fame.
11. Toward the cask dripping with honey they have surged onto the sheep's
fleece.
The insightful thoughts have bellowed.
12. Toward the sea have the drops gone, like milk-cows toward home,
to the womb of truth.

13. For our great joy the waters, the rivers rush forth, o drop,
when you will clothe yourself with cows.
14. Since we are likely to gain in comradeship with you, with you as
our help,
we long for comradeship, o drop.
15. Purify yourself for the quest for cattle, for the great one of manly eye,
o Soma.
Enter here into the belly of Indra.

16. Great are you, Soma, preeminent, strongest of the strong, o drop.
Being a battler, you win every time.
17. (You,) who are stronger even than the strong, more a champion even
than champions,
more generous even than those who give much,
18. You, Soma, are the sun; (bring) refreshments here at the winning of the
offspring of our own bodies.
We choose (you) for comradeship; we choose (you) for fellowship.

19. O Agni, you bring (longer) lifespans through your purification; impel
hither nourishment and refreshment to us.
Into the distance thrust misfortune.

20. Agni—a seer, self-purifying, belonging to the five peoples, installed
in front—
him we beseech for a great household.
21. Agni, as a good worker, through your purification bring luster and an
abundance of heroes for us,
establishing in me wealth and thriving.

22. The self-purifying one rushes across failures toward the lovely
praise hymn,
visible to all like the sun.
23. He, being constantly groomed by the Āyus, affording pleasure, is
established for pleasure,
the drop, a steed visible afar.
24. The self-purifying one, as the lofty truth, has begotten the
gleaming light,
continually smashing (back) the black shades of darkness.

25. Of the self-purifying one, continually smashing (back the darkness), of
the tawny one, the glittering (drops) have surged,
lively ones with flickering radiance.
26. The self-purifying one, the best charioteer, proclaimed as most
resplendent by the resplendent (Maruts),
gold-glittering, with the Maruts as his flock,
27. The self-purifying one will pervade with his rays, the best winner of prizes,
establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.

28. Being pressed, the drop has flowed forth across the fleecy filter;
being purified, the drop (has flowed) to Indra.
29. This Soma plays on the hide of cows with the stones,
repeatedly invoking Indra to exhilaration.
30. You, self-purifying one, whose heaven-bright milk was brought here
from heaven,
with it be gracious to us, for us to live.

IX.67 (779) Soma Pavamāna [or, according to Anukramaṇī, Soma Pavamāna 1–9, 13–22, 28–30; Soma Pavamāna or Pūṣan 10–12; Agni 23, 24; Agni or Savitar 25; Agni or Agni and Savitar 26; Agni or the All Gods 27; Praise of the Student of the Pavamānī Verses 31–32]

Bharadvāja 1–3, Kaśyapa 4–6, Gotama 7–9, Atri 10–12, Viśvāmitra 13–15, Jamadagni 16–18, Vasiṣṭha 19–21, Pavitra Āṅgirasa or Vasiṣṭha or both 22–32

32 verses: gāyatrī, except dvipadā gāyatrī 16–18, anuṣṭubh 27, 31–32, puraüṣṇih 30, arranged in tṛcas through verse 21.

This final hymn of the IXth Maṇḍala gāyatrī collection is, according to the Anukramaṇī, the product of at least seven different poets, most of them founding poets of the Family Books of the Ṛgveda and all eponymous ancestors of the most prominent gotras of later times—each responsible for a single tṛca, with the last eleven verses assigned either to yet another poet or to Vasiṣṭha, the poet of the immediately preceding tṛca. It has been convincingly argued by Proferes (2007: 10) that this structure shows that the separate lineage rites were already being collected into a single pan-Ārya ritual during the Ṛgvedic period and that this composite hymn was a conscious attempt to bring the various clans under one ritual umbrella. He argues that the final two verses (31–32) were added by the redactors or compilers and celebrate this ecumenical project, by declaring that the assemblage is greater and more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Certainly its parts are quite various. The first twenty-one verses, attributed to the various clan-poets, are for the most part conventional Soma Pavamāna verses, and the tṛcas for the most part exhibit some internal cohesion. The single unconventional tṛca consists of verses 10–12, attributed to Atri, in which the god Pūṣan dominates. Pūṣan otherwise scarcely appears in the IXth Maṇḍala, has little or no connection with soma elsewhere (gruel is his favored meal), and barely appears in the Atri Maṇḍala (V) except in lists of other gods. The reason for his intrusion here is unclear.

Verses 22–27 form a self-contained purificatory spell, calling on various gods, including Soma, Agni, and Savitar, in addition to groups of gods, to purify us with their own characteristic instruments. There follow two verses (28–29) that return to the soma theme, and then the strangest verse of all (30). The interpretation of this verse is much disputed, but it appears to refer to the myth of the disappearance of the ritual Agni and urges Soma to bring him back, along with a, or the, rat, which may be a reference to the god Rudra, whose animal victim in later ritual is a rat. But this is only a guess.

The last two supplementary verses (31–32) were discussed above.

1. You, Soma, are supporting, invigorating, strongest at the ceremony.
   Purify yourself, readying wealth.
2. You, bringing exhilaration to superior men when pressed, most
   exhilarating when you have run,
   are patron to Indra, with your stalk.
3. You, having been pressed by stones—rush, roaring constantly,
   toward highest brilliant tempestuous force.

4. The drop, being impelled, rushes across the sheep's fleece;
   the tawny one has roared for the prize.
5. O drop, you rush through the fleece, through to acclamations, through to
   gifts of good fortune,
   through to prizes consisting of cows, o Soma.
6. Bring here to us, o drop, wealth in cattle and horses—
   a hundredfold, a thousandfold, o soma.

7. The self-purifying drops, swift across the filter,
   have reached Indra on their journeys.
8. The prominent somian sap, the primordial drop
   purifies itself for Indra—a lively one for a lively one [/Āyu].
9. The rosy (fingers) impel the sun; to the self-purifying one, dripping
   with honey,
   they cry out in unison with a song.

10. Pūṣan whose horses are goats is our helper on every journey.
    – He will give us a share in maidens.
11. This Soma here purifies himself, honeyed like ghee, for the one with
    braided hair [=Pūṣan].
    – He will give us a share in maidens.
12. This pressed soma here purifies himself, gleaming like ghee, for you,
    glowing one.
    – He will give us a share in maidens.

13. As child of the speech of the poets, o Soma, purify yourself in a stream.
    You are the one among the gods who establishes treasure.
14. He runs into the tubs; the falcon plunges through the armor
    toward the cups, roaring constantly.
15. Your sap, Soma, when pressed, has surged forth and around into
    the tub.
    Like a falcon launched in flight, it rushes.

16. Purify yourself, Soma, causing exhilaration, most honeyed for Indra.
17. They have been released to pursue the gods, like chariots seeking
    the prize.
18. The clear pressed soma-juices, most invigorating, have surged to Vāyu.

19. Pounded by the stone, bepraised, you go to the filter, o Soma,
    establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.
20. This one, pounded, bepraised, plunges across the filter,
    the sheep's fleece, as demon-smasher.
21. What peril nearby and what at a little distance finds me here—
    o self-purifying one, smash that away.

22. The one who purifies himself through our filter today, the limitless one
    who is the purifier, let him purify us.
23. The filter that is stretched out here within your flame, o Agni,
    and the sacred formulation—with that purify us.
24. Your filter of flames, Agni—with that purify us;
    with the impulsions of sacred formulations purify us.
25. With both, god Savitar, with the filter and with your impulsion
    purify me all about.

This final hymn of the IXth Maṇḍala gāyatrī collection is, according to the Anukramaṇī, the product of at least seven different poets, most of them founding poets of the Family Books of the Ṛgveda and all eponymous ancestors of the most prominent gotras of later times—each responsible for a single tṛca, with the last eleven verses assigned either to yet another poet or to Vasiṣṭha, the poet of the immediately preceding tṛca. It has been convincingly argued by Proferes (2007: 10) that this structure shows that the separate lineage rites were already being collected into a single pan-Ārya ritual during the Ṛgvedic period and that this composite hymn was a conscious attempt to bring the various clans under one ritual umbrella. He argues that the final two verses (31–32) were added by the redactors or compilers and celebrate this ecumenical project, by declaring that the assemblage is greater and more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Certainly its parts are quite various. The first twenty-one verses, attributed to the various clan-poets, are for the most part conventional Soma Pavamāna verses, and the tṛcas for the most part exhibit some internal cohesion. The single unconventional tṛca consists of verses 10–12, attributed to Atri, in which the god Pūṣan dominates. Pūṣan otherwise scarcely appears in the IXth Maṇḍala, has little or no connection with soma elsewhere (gruel is his favored meal), and barely appears in the Atri Maṇḍala (V) except in lists of other gods. The reason for his intrusion here is unclear.

Verses 22–27 form a self-contained purificatory spell, calling on various gods, including Soma, Agni, and Savitar, in addition to groups of gods, to purify us with their own characteristic instruments. There follow two verses (28–29) that return to the soma theme, and then the strangest verse of all (30). The interpretation of this verse is much disputed, but it appears to refer to the myth of the disappearance of the ritual Agni and urges Soma to bring him back, along with a, or the, rat, which may be a reference to the god Rudra, whose animal victim in later ritual is a rat. But this is only a guess.

The last two supplementary verses (31–32) were discussed above.

1. You, Soma, are supporting, invigorating, strongest at the ceremony.
   Purify yourself, readying wealth.
2. You, bringing exhilaration to superior men when pressed, most
   exhilarating when you have run,
   are patron to Indra, with your stalk.
3. You, having been pressed by stones—rush, roaring constantly,
   toward highest brilliant tempestuous force.

4. The drop, being impelled, rushes across the sheep's fleece;
   the tawny one has roared for the prize.
5. O drop, you rush through the fleece, through to acclamations, through to
   gifts of good fortune,
   through to prizes consisting of cows, o Soma.
6. Bring here to us, o drop, wealth in cattle and horses—
   a hundredfold, a thousandfold, o soma.

7. The self-purifying drops, swift across the filter,
   have reached Indra on their journeys.
8. The prominent somian sap, the primordial drop
   purifies itself for Indra—a lively one for a lively one [/Āyu].
9. The rosy (fingers) impel the sun; to the self-purifying one, dripping
   with honey,
   they cry out in unison with a song.

10. Pūṣan whose horses are goats is our helper on every journey.
    – He will give us a share in maidens.
11. This Soma here purifies himself, honeyed like ghee, for the one with
    braided hair [=Pūṣan].
    – He will give us a share in maidens.
12. This pressed soma here purifies himself, gleaming like ghee, for you,
    glowing one.
    – He will give us a share in maidens.

13. As child of the speech of the poets, o Soma, purify yourself in a stream.
    You are the one among the gods who establishes treasure.
14. He runs into the tubs; the falcon plunges through the armor
    toward the cups, roaring constantly.
15. Your sap, Soma, when pressed, has surged forth and around into
    the tub.
    Like a falcon launched in flight, it rushes.

16. Purify yourself, Soma, causing exhilaration, most honeyed for Indra.
17. They have been released to pursue the gods, like chariots seeking
    the prize.
18. The clear pressed soma-juices, most invigorating, have surged to Vāyu.

19. Pounded by the stone, bepraised, you go to the filter, o Soma,
    establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.
20. This one, pounded, bepraised, plunges across the filter,
    the sheep's fleece, as demon-smasher.
21. What peril nearby and what at a little distance finds me here—
    o self-purifying one, smash that away.

22. The one who purifies himself through our filter today, the limitless one
    who is the purifier, let him purify us.
23. The filter that is stretched out here within your flame, o Agni,
    and the sacred formulation—with that purify us.
24. Your filter of flames, Agni—with that purify us;
    with the impulsions of sacred formulations purify us.
25. With both, god Savitar, with the filter and with your impulsion
    purify me all about.

26. With the three purify us—you, god Savitar, with your greatest (impulsions), you, Soma, through your greatest domains,
and you, Agni, with your skills.
27. Let the godly folk purify me; let the Vasus purify me with insight.
O All Gods, purify me; o Jātavedas, purify me.

28. Swell forth, flow forth, Soma, with all your shoots
as highest oblation for the gods.
29. Close to the dear youth who always excites wonder, the one growing strong through the poured offering,
have we come, bearing homage.

30. The axe [=flame] of the one not to be stilled [=Agni] (has) disappeared.
By purifying yourself bring it here, o god Soma,
so also the rat [=Rudra?], o god Soma.

31. Whoever studies the "Self-Purifying" (verses), the sap assembled by the seers,
that one eats the whole purified (sap), sweetened by Mātariśvan.
32. Whoever studies the "Self-Purifying" (verses), the sap assembled by the seers,
for him Sarasvatī milks out milk, fresh butter, honey, and water.

Jagatī Hymns: 68–86

IX.68 (780) Soma Pavamāna

Vatsaprī Bhālandana
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

The first of the Soma hymns in jagatī meter (IX.68–86), this poem well demonstrates the increased possibilities for verbal and conceptual richness that the longer meter affords, in contrast to the concision and constriction of gāyatrī. The hymn has an omphalos structure: since verse 10 is a summary verse and in a different meter (triṣṭubh), verse 5 is the middle verse and encodes the esoteric knowledge that is the hymn's message. This verse is framed by a number of verbal and semantic responsions (though not as tightly arranged as in some omphalos hymns): for instance, the fingers of verses 4 and 7, as well as the same phrase "held by men" in both verses; the forms of the root *vid* "find, discover" in verses 3 and 6 (and 9).

More important is the conceptual architecture: the hymn leads up to the omphalos and away from it, returning to its conceptual starting point. It begins with the ritual soma and the familiar details of its preparation (vss. 1–2): the journey across the filter and the mixing with milk, complete with details about the actual filtering process, as the juice leaves its detritus in the filter. But toward the end of verse 2, the journey gains a larger resonance, however vague: soma circles "the wide expanse," an area that sounds more ample than a mere sheep's fleece. In verses 3 and 4 the journey has turned cosmic: heaven and earth are now the domain for Soma's travel and for his fecundating activity, and in our view the contrast between Soma's swelling footprint in 4b and his head in 4d expresses his cosmic reach, from his feet on earth, swelling with rain, to his distant head in heaven.

Verse 5, the omphalos, provides an explanation, albeit a mystical one, for the difference between the ritual soma of the first two verses and the cosmic one of verses 3–4. He really had two births, one in secret even beyond the two worlds and one made evident to all. And as a consequence there are actually two Somas, a fact first recognized by Heaven and Earth. (Such is our reading of this verse, which has generally been interpreted quite differently: one influential opinion identifies the Aśvins as the twins mentioned, a solution of desperation in our opinion.)

The second form of Soma, the physical and visible one, is brought to earth in verse 6, and the poets and ritualists transform him into the ritual soma now familiar to us. The remaining verses before the summary (7–9) bring us back to the current ritual soma with which we began, but with a clearer awareness of the powers his dual nature has bestowed on him. For example, in verse 1 the drops are simply "provided with speech," but in verses 8–9 Soma "rouses speech" all the way to heaven. Similarly, in verse 2 he simply "circles around" the wide expanse, whereas in 9d, the last pāda of the hymn proper, he "finds" wide space, a feat much desired and much celebrated by the Vedic Āryas.

1. Forth toward the god have the honeyed drops flowed, like milk-cows.
Sitting on the ritual grass, provided with speech, with (full) udders, they have assumed as their swirling raiment the ruddy (cows' milk).
2. Bellowing continually he has cried out to the (cows) in front; loosening his shoots, the tawny one becomes sweet.
Across the filter, circling around the broad expanse, the god will lay down his stems at will.
3. The exhilarating drink, which measured across the converging twin sisters [=Heaven and Earth], swelled those two imperishable ones, grown strong simultaneously, with imperishable milk.
Continually rediscovering the two great, unbounded world-halves, advancing upon imperishable (space), he assumed his full dimension.
4. Wandering between the two mothers [=Heaven and Earth], stirring up the waters, the wise one swells his own footprint by his independent power.
The plant is ornamented with grain when he is held by men; while he joins with his female kin [=fingers], he guards his own head.

5. Along with skill and mind the poet is born; the embryo of truth was deposited beyond the twins [=Heaven and Earth].
Those two were the first to recognize that there were two youths: the (one) birth deposited in secret and the other held aloft.
6. The inspired thinkers discovered the form of the gladdening one, when the falcon brought the stalk from out of the distance.
They groomed him in the rivers, the eager well-grown plant, circling around, worthy of verses.
7. The ten maidens [=fingers] groom you when you are pressed, Soma, when you are impelled by the seers with thoughts and insights
and with invocations of the gods through the sheep's fleeces. Held by men, you will break out the prize to be won.
8. The inspired thoughts, the rhythms have roared to Soma, the branchy one, circling forth, keeping good company,
who, honeyed, in a stream, in a wave from heaven, rouses speech—the immortal one who conquers wealth.
9. This is the one who rouses (speech) to the whole realm of heaven. Soma, being purified, sits in the tubs.
He is groomed with waters, with cows, when he has been pressed by stones. Being purified, the drop finds dear wide space.
10. In just this way, o Soma, purify yourself, being poured all around, establishing for us vigor most bright.
We would invoke Heaven and Earth, the two without hatred. O gods, establish wealth rich in heroes for us.

IX.69 (781) Soma Pavamāna

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

Attributed to the same poet as the author of the famous Indra hymn I.32 (and indeed I.31–35, as well as IX.4), this hymn is dense with ever-shifting imagery, expressed in many forms: similes, metaphors, identifications. Sometimes several referents are simultaneously possible, as in verse 1, where both "thought" and "soma" could be the subject of the middle part of the verse. This verbal richness is quite appropriate, since at least the first two verses concern the poetic impulse; note the nice description of the tongue as "the gladdening goad" in 2b.

The middle verses (3–7) treat Soma's journey across the filter to meet and mix with the cows/milk. This mixture is described in increasingly elaborate images of clothing in verses 4–5, ending with the cosmos as his garment (5cd). The journey is completed in the first half of verse 7, and the hymn comes to a more conventional ending with prayers for goods and aid.

1. Like an arrow on a bow, my thought is aimed. It is released like a calf to the udder of its mother.
Like (a cow) with a broad stream, it gives milk as it comes here in the lead. Under the commandments of this one [=Soma the god], the soma (juice) is dispatched.
2. And while my thought is being engorged, the honey is poured. The gladdening goad [=tongue] bestirs itself within the mouth.
The self-purifying one is a thundering, like (the thundering) of beaters. The honeyed drop rushes round the fleece.
3. Seeking his wives, he purifies himself all around in the fleece and upon the hide. The granddaughter of Aditi loosens (her garment [=shoots of the soma plant]) for him who goes to truth.
The tawny one [/fallow bay], held fast, has whinnied—the sacrificial exhilarating drink. Sharpening his own manly powers, like a buffalo, he beautifies himself.
4. The bull bellows, and the milk-cows go in response. The goddesses go to their rendezvous with the god.
He has stridden beyond the silvery sheep's fleece. Soma has wrapped himself in (milk) as if in a freshly washed cloak.
5. Being arrayed, the immortal tawny one has wrapped himself with an unworn, gleaming garment.
With his might he has made the back of heaven for his raiment and an underlayer made of cloud in the two cups.
6. Like the rays of the sun that set sleepers in motion, the exhilarating (soma juices) arise all at once from sleep.
The swift surges (surge) around the stretched string [=filter]. But without Indra he [=Soma] does not purify any domain of his.
7. As at the forward plunge of a river toward the deep, the swift exhilarating drinks, roused by bulls, have achieved their course.
Weal (be) for our two-footed and our four-footed at their homecoming. Let prizes and peoples stand by us, Soma.
8. By purifying yourself bring (wealth) in goods and gold, in horses, cows, and barley, and an abundance of good heroes,
for you (soma-juices), o Soma, are my fathers, the heads of heaven, set forth as creators of vitality for me.
9. These self-purifying soma juices have gone forth to Indra, like chariots to a win.
Pressed, the tawny ones go beyond the ovine filter, having left behind their cover, to the rain.
10. O drop, purify yourself for lofty Indra, since you are very merciful, beyond reproach, caring for the stranger.
Bring gleaming goods to the singer. O Heaven and Earth, together with the gods—further us.

IX.70 (782) Soma Pavamāna

Reṇu Viśvāmitra
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

An intricate and difficult hymn, some of whose puzzles remain unsolved. The theme of the hymn is the difference between, and ultimate unity of, heavenly Soma and earthly, ritual Soma—a theme that was also the subject of nearby IX.68. The disjunction is announced in the first verse, where the "real" milk-mixture is produced in heaven, and the worlds are Soma's garment. In verse 2, by contrast, it seems that the earthly Soma is seeking a share of his heavenly counterpart by performing cosmic deeds through ritual means. A rapprochement is effected in verse 3, where Soma's beacons (*kétu*) go to and work upon both men and gods, and as a consequence they accept him as their king; on the basis of other passages in which this term is found, the beacons appear to be both his cosmic sunlike rays and the glinting streams of ritual soma as they circle in the filter. The intermediary role of Soma between gods and men and Heaven and Earth remains the subject of the following verses (4–6), though not all is clear, especially the first half of verse 4 and the last half of verse 6. The last four verses (7–10) return us to the ritual Soma and his ultimate goal, the body of Indra, but the cosmic associations he acquired in the earlier parts of the hymn make him nourishment fit for the gods.

1. Three times seven milk-cows have milked out for him the real milk-mixture in the foremost distant heaven.
   He made the four other dear worlds to be his raiment, when he grew strong through the truths [=hymns].
2. Seeking a share of the dear immortal one, through his poetic skill he has loosened both, Heaven (and Earth), from each other.
   He lavishly wraps himself in the glinting-sharp waters when, by the god's [=Soma's] fame, they [=waters] know his seat.
3. Let those immortal undeceivable beacons of his suffuse both races [=gods and men],
   the beacons by which both manly and godly (powers) become purified.
   Just because of that have the zealous ones accepted him as their king.
4. He, being groomed by the ten who work well [=fingers], (goes) forth to bellow forth amid the midmost mothers [=waters?].
   Protecting the commandments of the dear immortal one [=heavenly soma], having his sight on men, he surveys both clans [=gods and men].
5. Constantly being groomed, propelled between the two worlds-halves, he is roused to give suck to Indra.
   With his blustering the bull thrusts away evil thoughts, always setting his sights, like a sharpshooter, on rich spoils.

6. The ruddy one, becoming visible, goes (to Heaven and Earth) as if to his two mothers, roaring again and again, like the clamor of the Maruts.
   Recognizing the first truth, which is the realm of solar splendor, he of strong will has chosen it for his glorification.
7. The fearsome bull bellows forcefully, sharpening his golden horns, wide-gazing.
   Soma sits down upon his well-made womb. His skin comes to be made of cattle; his garment of sheep.
8. Gleaming, purifying his spotless body, the tawny one has run down onto the sheep's back,
   pleasing to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Vāyu. The honey is made threefold by those who make it well.
9. Purify yourself as bull, Soma, to pursue the gods. Enter the heart of Indra, which is the receptacle of Soma.
   Ahead of oppression, carry us across difficulties, for he who knows the territory tells the directions to the one who asks.
10. Like a team spurred on, rush to the prize. O drop, purify yourself into the belly of Indra.
    Carry us across (difficulties) as if across a river with a boat, since you know how. Like a battling champion, rescue us from insult.

IX.71 (783) Soma Pavamāna

Ṛṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9

The subject of this hymn is, as so often, Soma's journey across the filter to take his seat as ritual drink after the various stages of preparation. The journey is presented as a straightforward trajectory on the one hand, with his arrival among the gods and his union with the praise hymn the last step, in verse 8. But the hymn is also structured by a number of responsions between the earlier and the later verses; note especially 2b and 8a, with the almost identical phrases "the color that is his" and "this is his color." In this particular example the forward movement of the journey and the architectonic structure of responsions complement each other, for in verse 2 Soma sheds his original form and color and in verse 8 he gains new ones.

1. The tempestuous one is sent surging, along with the gift-cow, to take his seat here. Vigilant, he pursues deceits and protects from the demon.
   The tawny one makes himself a headdress, cloud and milk for an underlayer in the two cups, and the sacred formulation for his raiment.

2. Like a smiter of peoples, explosive he goes forth, roaring again and again. He spills down the lordly color that is his.
   He abandons his covering, and he goes to his rendezvous with his father. He makes what floats nearby [=milk] in its full measure into his fresh garment.
3. Pressed by the stones, he purifies himself between the two hands. With his cloud he acts the bull [/rains]; he trembles (in poetic inspiration) with his thought.
   He rejoices in, unites with, achieves success through the song. He washes himself in the waters. He sacrifices for himself in his fullness.
4. All around they sprinkle the heaven-ruling (son) of strength, of honey, grown strong upon the mountain, the conqueror of the secure house,
   in whom, on whose head, the cows prepare the foremost (milk) in their udder in broad (streams) for him who eats the good oblation [=Indra].
5. The ten sisters on the two hands have assembled him like a chariot, here in the lap of Aditi.
   As he goes, he extends toward the secret track of the cow which the thoughtful have produced for him.
6. Like a falcon to its womb [=nest], the god hastens to sit upon the golden seat made by insight.
   They let the dear one spill onto the ritual grass with a song. Like a horse (its stall), the one worthy of the sacrifice approaches the gods.
7. Far away is the ruddy poet of heaven, all adorned. The three-backed bull has bellowed to the cows.
   The marshal who has a thousand ways and means [=Soma] radiates, like the hoarse-voiced singer [=Agni], across the many dawns as they go away.
8. He makes for himself a glittering form—that is his color. When he has lain down in the clash (of the pressing stones), he wards off errors.
   Winning the waters, he drives by his own will to the divine folk. He joins with the lovely praise hymn, with what is tipped with cows.
9. Like a bull going around the herds, he has bellowed as he circles. He has put on the glitterings of the sun.
   The heavenly eagle looks down upon the earth. Soma surveys the creatures in accord with his purpose.

IX.72 (784) Soma Pavamāna

Harimanta Āṅgirasa
9 verses: jagatī

The role of humans in both the physical and the verbal preparation of Soma is emphasized in this hymn. The first verse sets this tone, with the anonymous priestly subjects of "they groom" of pāda a and the anonymous praisers who impel the soma in the second half, a division of labor found as well in verse 2; see also verses 4–6, 8. The exact responsion of the last parts of 4d and 5b seem to mark an omphalos, but there is little other evidence for such a structure.

The hymn contains one major problem: the hapax *vinaṃgṛsá* in 3c. The phraseology in this pāda is strongly suggestive of erotic slang, but unfortunately the word has so far defeated all attempts to decode it. It is worth noting, however, that it is a partial anagram of the patronymic of the poet Harimanta Āṅgirasa, and he may be punning on his name in this playful, erotic context.

1. They groom the tawny one [/fallow bay]; like a chestnut he is yoked. Soma is anointed with milk-cows in the tub.
   When he raises his voice, the circle of friends of the one praised by many—however many they are—speed him on with their thought.
2. The many inspired thinkers speak all at once, when they have milked the soma into the belly of Indra,
   when the men of skilled hands groom him, the desirable honey, with the ten belonging to the same nest [=fingers].
3. Not stopping, he goes beyond (the filter) toward the cows, across the dear bellow of the Daughter of the Sun.
   According to his pleasure, the vinaṃgṛsa [?] "stuck it" to him. He dwells together with the paired, kindred sisters [=fingers].
4. Rinsed by men, pressed by stones, the dear one on the ritual grass, the husband of the cows, from of old the drop that follows the ritual seasons,
   accompanied by Plenitude, assuring success to the sacrifice of Manu, gleaming, with insight he purifies himself for you, Indra.
5. Driven on by the two arms of men, pressed in a stream, following his own nature Soma purifies himself for you, Indra.
   He has fulfilled their intentions; he has won completely the thoughts at the ceremony. Like a bird sitting in the wood the tawny one has taken his seat in the two cups.
6. They milk the thundering, imperishable plant; the industrious inspired poets (milk) the poet.
   The cows and the thoughts in uninterrupted array, ever regenerating, go together to him in the womb, the seat of truth.
7. On the navel of earth is the buttress of great heaven. In the wave of the waters and within the rivers he is sprinkled.
   The mace of Indra, the bull possessing conspicuous goods, the invigorating soma purifies himself in a way dear to the heart.
8. Purify yourself all around the earthly realm, as you do your best for the man who praises and the man who rinses (you), you very resolute one.
   Don't deal us out of a portion of a good that will touch our dwellings: might we clothe ourselves in ample golden wealth.

9. (Bring) here for us, o drop, a hundred shares of horses, a thousand shares of flocks and gold.
Measure out lofty, rich refreshments. Give study to our praise, self-purifying one.

IX.73 (785) Soma Pavamāna

Pavitra Āṅgirasa
9 verses: jagatī

A complex and enigmatic hymn, whose difficulties stem primarily from the double system of reference that pervades the hymn. The signature phrase is "they have sounded in unison" (*sám asvaran*, vss. 1, 4, 5, 6); in none of its occurrences is there an overt subject, an omission that is surely deliberate. The verb forms in question, and indeed most of the hymn, can be interpreted as referring either to the soma streams as they noisily cross the filter or to the priests/poets who provide the hymns that accompany soma's journey. This double reference is found even in the name of the poet to whom the hymn is attributed: Pavitra ("Filter"): the filter is both the sheep's wool filter that purifies the soma and the poet who creates the ritual speech; the word *pavítra* occurs several times in the hymn (vss. 3, 7, 8, 9, and implicitly 4). The "solution" to the central riddle of the hymn, this dual reference, is suggested in the first half of verse 7 and definitely expressed in the final verse (9), where "the thread of truth" (*ṛtásya tántuḥ*) is stretched both on the filter and on the tongue-tip. The thread may be both the track of the soma across the filter and the continuous line of speech. The second half of the verse emphasizes the importance of united action to attain it, and the necessity of always advancing.

Another thematic strain is the deployment of the power of this unified sound against enemies and hostile forces (see esp. vss. 5, 6, 8), a power associated with Varuṇa and his *māyā́* ("magic power, artifice," vss. 5 and 9), with whom Soma is identified, first in verse 3. Varuṇa is of course the protector of commandments (*vratá*, vss. 3, 5, 8) and is associated with truth/true speech (*ṛtá*, vss. 1, 6, 8, 9), words prominent in the hymn. Thus, Soma, as the embodiment of Varuṇa, and the poets who assist him can marshal Varuṇa's weapon, "true speech," against forces that deny or attempt to thwart it.

Many individual puzzles remain, but the overall structure and purpose of the hymn are clear.

1. In the jaw (of the pressing stones) while the droplet was blowing its blast, they sounded in unison. The ties of lineage have joined together in the womb of truth.
The lord [=Soma] has made his three heads to be seized. The boats of the trusty one [=Soma] have brought the good (ritual) performer across to the other shore.

2. Altogether joined together, the buffaloes have been propelled [/have propelled (him)]. The seekers have set (him/speech) atremble in the swell of the river.
Giving birth to the chant with the streams of honey, they have made Indra's own dear body grow strong.
3. Provided with the filter, they take their seats around speech. Their ancient father guards his commandment.
As great Varuṇa, (Soma) has hidden himself in the sea. Only the insightful have been able to take hold of his supports.
4. Down in that (filter) of a thousand streams, they have sounded in unison—as have the honey-tongued, inexhaustible (streams) in the vault of heaven.
His fervent spies do not blink: at every step there are snares that bind.
5. Those who sounded in unison from the father and the mother [=Heaven and Earth], blazing with their verse, burning up those who follow no commandment,
they blow away by magic power the black skin hated by Indra, from earth and from heaven—
6. Those who sounded in unison from their ancient edifice, those with a signaling call for their reins, counselors of the wild one [=Soma].
The blind and deaf have retreated: evildoers do not traverse the path of truth.
7. Here in the wide-stretched filter of a thousand streams the poets of inspired thought purify their speech.
The lively Rudras [=Maruts] without deceit are their spies, well directed, lovely to see, with their eyes on men.
8. The herdsman of truth is not to be tricked: his will is strong. He has set three filters within his heart.
Knowing, he looks upon all living creatures. He jabs the disgusting deniers of commandments down into the pit.
9. The thread of truth is stretched widely, here on the filter and on the tip of the tongue, through the magic power of Varuṇa.
Only the insightful, seeking to reach it together, have attained it. The one who does not advance will fall down into the pit here.

IX.74 (786) Soma Pavamāna

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8

This hymn is attributed to Kakṣīvant, the skilled and crafty poet of I.116–126, who names himself in verse 8. Although it is not as intricate as some of his Ist Maṇḍala productions, it invites the same sort of double readings as the previous

hymn (IX.73) and achieves this ambiguity by the same means, the suppression of overt referential subjects and objects. It is notable that the word *sóma* appears only twice (and only toward the end, vss. 7 and 9) and derivatives of the root *pū* "purify" only in the final verse.

The primary doubled reference arises from the identification of soma with rain. Particularly in the central verses 4–6 the entities and actions described can apply to either or both; for example, the men "pissing down" the unnamed substance in 4d may either be the Maruts producing rain or the priests producing soma. Toward the end the discourse becomes more clearly somian, and these are the verses in which the words "soma" and "self-purifying" appear.

1. Like a new-born (calf), he has roared down into the wood(en vessel).
   When the ruddy racehorse strives to win the sun,
   he keeps company with the milk-strong semen of heaven. We implore him for extensive protection through his benevolence.
2. The (soma) plant, the prop and buttress of heaven, which, when well extended and fully filled, encompasses in every direction,
   that (plant) will offer sacrifice to these two great world-halves when they turn hither. The poet unites the united pair and the refreshing drinks.
3. A great delight is the well-prepared somian honey, and wide is the pasture-land of Aditi for him who goes to truth,
   who, as a dawn-red bull, is master of the rain from here, who is the leader of the waters, ageless and worthy of verses.
4. The embodied cloud is milked of ghee and milk. The navel of truth, the immortal (drink) is born.
   United, possessed of good drops, they please him. The swollen men piss down the one propelled.
5. The plant, keeping company with the wave, has roared. For Manu it swells the skin that seeks out the gods.
   It deposits the embryo in the lap of Aditi, the one by which we will acquire both progeny and prosperity.
6. Let there be inexhaustible (streams) down in the (filter) of a thousand streams, and in the third realm (streams) bringing offspring.
   The four hidden (streams), bursting down from heaven, dripping with ghee, carry the oblation, the immortal (drink).
7. He makes himself a white form when he is striving to win. Soma, benefactor and lord, knows the world.
   He keeps company with insight and (ritual) labor—that is the course (that leads) to him. He will split open the water-filled cask of heaven.
8. And the racehorse, having won, has stridden to the gleaming white tub anointed with cows, at the finish line.
   Those serving the gods propel him with their mind. (Let there be a hundred) cows for Kakṣīvant of a hundred winters.

9. Your juice, when you have been infused with the waters, runs through the sheep's fleece, o self-purifying one.
   Being groomed by the poets, become sweet for Indra to drink, o most exhilarating self-purifying one.

IX.75 (787) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

Soma's deep, almost reflexive, involvement in verbal products and production is the subject of the first two verses of the hymn. He strengthens himself on his own names in verse 1, and in verse 2 is both the physical (tongue, speaker) and conceptual (father) source of truth and insight. In the second half of verse 2, in the sort of paradox much beloved by Ṛgvedic seers, he not only knows the hidden names but as son bestows them on his parents.

The remaining three verses are more conventionally concerned with the preparation of the ritual soma, though his connection with cosmic entities remains clear, especially in verse 4.

This hymn and the four following (IX.75–70) are attributed to the same poet as the gāyatrī hymns IX.47–49.

1. Delighted, he purifies himself, (aiming) toward his own dear names, upon which the youthfully exuberant one grows strong.
   The lofty one, wide gazing, has mounted upon the chariot of the lofty sun that faces in many directions.
2. As the tongue of truth, he purifies himself as his own dear honey—he, the speaker and father of this insight, who cannot be deceived.
   The son sets a secret name on his two parents and a third in the luminous realm of heaven.
3. Flashing, he has roared down toward the tubs, being guided by men into the golden bucket.
   Those who produce the milk of truth have bellowed to him.
   Triple-backed, he rules [/shines] afar over the dawns.
4. Pressed with stones, delighted by our thoughts, making the two world-halves, his mothers, to shine forth, the blazing one
   races through the woolen hairs all at once, as a stream of honey swelling day after day.
5. Run forth all around, Soma, for our well-being. As you are being purified by men, dress yourself in the milk-mixture.
   With those exhilarating drinks of yours, luxuriant and expansive, stimulate Indra to give us bounty.

IX.76 (788) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

This portrait of Soma militant resembles the martial spirit of another of Kavi Bhārgava's hymns, IX.47. The dense series of combative images also track Soma's journey through the purificatory procedure, and his warlike power is to be harnessed for our own ends in the final verse (5). But Soma is not merely a warrior; he is also a master of verbal art, who triumphs in poetic competitions (vs. 4). A short but very satisfying poem.

1. The supporter of heaven purifies himself, the sap that gets results, the skill of the gods to be celebrated by men.
   The tawny one sent surging, like a charger by warriors, deploys his full dimensions in the rivers at will.
2. Like a champion, he takes his weapons in his hands, a chariot-rider striving to win the sun in the cattle raids.
   Rousing Indra's tempestuous force, the drop propelled by the industrious ones [=fingers] is anointed [/driven] by those of inspired thought.
3. O Soma, purifying yourself in a wave, displaying your power, enter the belly of Indra.
   Swell the two worlds for us, as lightning does the rain clouds. As if according to our vision, mete out prizes to us over and over.
4. He purifies himself, the king of all who see the sun. Vanquishing the seers, he has made the vision of truth bellow.
   He who is groomed by the lance [=ray] of the sun is the father of thoughts, one whose poetic skill is entirely unattainable.
5. Like a bull around the herds, you charge around the cask, a bull roaring again and again in the lap of the waters.
   You purify yourself to be most invigorating for Indra, so that we who have your help will conquer in the clash.

IX.77 (789) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

In addition to familiar tropes of soma-preparation (e.g., vss. 1, 3, 4), the hymn briefly treats the famous myth in which a falcon steals soma from heaven (vs. 2), with one of the few Ṛgvedic mentions of the heavenly archer Kṛśānu, who attempted retaliation. As noted, verse 4 for the most part is a standard soma verse, but pāda c skates fleetingly and unemphatically over an apparent paradox, with a male Soma conceiving himself as his own embryo. In the final verse Soma is compared to Varuṇa, because of his control over truth and deceit, and to Mitra, in his role as mediator among communities.

1. This honeyed one has cried out in the bucket, the mace of Indra, more wondrous than any wonder.
   The good milkers of truth, dripping with ghee, rush bellowing to him, like milk-cows with their milk.
2. The primordial one purifies himself—he whom the falcon, propelled across the airy realm, stole from heaven.
   Quivering, with a mind fearing Kṛśānu the archer, it [=falcon] binds on the honey.
3. Let these drops, those ahead and those behind, run to a great prize of cows for us—
   those drops worth looking at, cherished like fertile cows, which take pleasure in every sacred formulation, every oblation.
4. This one here, knowing how, will win against those who seek to win—the drop praised by many with fully focused mind,
   who has conceived the embryo in the seat of the powerful one and rushes to the wide-open pen of cows.
5. The active, effective sap of heaven purifies himself as great Varuṇa, not to be deceived by one who goes astray.
   The one worthy of the sacrifice has been pressed as Mitra in the (ritual) enclosures [/communities], constantly whinnying like a charger acting the bull in the herd.

IX.78 (790) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

A fairly straightforward hymn. The first three verses treat the preparation of the soma: after being swollen with water it is sent forth into the filter, which captures the plant detritus, on its way to the milk mixture (vs. 1); it goes across the filter and into the cup (vs. 2); and it is mixed with waters, here unusually personified as the nymph-like females, the Apsarases (vs. 3). The last two verses list the benefits that will accrue to us when the gods drink the soma.

1. The king, begetting speech, has flowed forth; clothing himself in the waters, he seeks to attain to the cows.
   The sheep grasps his defilement, (the stems) attached to his body. Cleansed, he travels to his rendezvous with the gods.

2. For Indra, o Soma, you are poured in circles by the men. As a wave drawing the gaze of men, as poet, you are driven to the wood [/anointed in the wood],
for there are many courses for you to travel and a thousand fallow bay horses sitting in the cups.
3. The Apsarases belonging to the sea, sitting within, have streamed toward Soma of inspired thought.
They spur him on, the conqueror of the secure house; they beg the imperishable self-purifying one for his grace.
4. Winning cows for us, winning chariots and gold, winning the sun and the waters, winning thousands, Soma purifies himself,
whom the gods have made their exhilarating draught for drinking, the sweetest ruddy drop, who is joy itself.
5. O Soma, purifying yourself, you rush, seeking us, while making these treasures real.
Smash the rival nearby and the one who is in the distance; make wide pasturage and fearlessness for us.

IX.79 (791) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

The combative spirit of this hymn is reminiscent of that in other hymns attributed to Kavi Bhārgava, especially IX.47 and IX.76. The hymn is especially interesting because of the light it throws on social divisions in the Ṛgvedic period. The word *arí* (vss. 1, 3), here translated "stranger" following Thieme (1938), is a much-discussed and much-contested one, underlying as it does derivatives such as *árya* "Ārya." We are of the opinion that an *arí* is a member of the larger Ārya society, but not of one's immediate community. He is thus a stranger, but one with whom one in principle shares social values and to whom one owes certain reciprocal duties, such as hospitality. But as a stranger he may also pose a threat to the smaller community one belongs to, if he exhibits hostility rather than a communal spirit. The scenario sketched in this hymn involves the latter type of *arí*, whose hostility menaces the success of our sacrifice (vs. 1). Verse 3 is quite explicit about the affinity of the *arí*: he is "one of our own," while a person who does not belong to the larger Ārya society is called a "wolf," an outlaw, when his actions threaten us. The poet calls on Soma to destroy both types of enemies.

Verse 4 provides a brief interlude, outlining the cosmic dimensions of Soma—from heaven to earth, where his "fingers," the shoots of the plant, grow—and a few details of the preparation, vividly rendered. This verse cleverly incorporates four different body parts (navel, fingers, skin, and hands) each belonging to a different entity. The final verse summarizes the process of pressing and calls once more for Soma to display his feistiness on our behalf.

1. Without impulsion let our tawny drops run, forth to those dwelling in lofty heaven, when they are pressed.
If hostilities will reach our refreshments, those of the stranger will go to destruction. Our insightful thoughts will prevail.
2. Let our drops run forth, those arousing exhilaration, or (those) with which we speed the chargers to the stakes,
across the crookedness of any mortal. May we always bear away the stakes.
3. Now, in the case of the hostility of one of our own, (we proclaim:) "he, indeed, is a stranger!" And, in the case of the hostility belonging to the other (side), (we proclaim:) "he, indeed, is a wolf!"
As if in a desert, thirst should strike them. O self-purifying Soma, smite those of evil intent.
4. It was in heaven, in its navel to which your highest (form) was bound; your "fingers" have grown on the back of the earth.
The stones gnaw you on the skin of the cow. Those of inspired thought milk you in the waters with their hands.
5. In just this way, o drop, do those foremost ones, excelling in splendor, express your sap of good essence and good ornament.
Self-purifying one, you will undermine every scorn(er). Let your tempestuous spirit, your dear exhilaration become manifest.

IX.80 (792) Soma Pavamāna

Vasu Bhāradvāja
5 verses: jagatī

On the one hand, this hymn is somewhat static, stuck at the same stage of soma's preparation, as the almost exact responsion of the last two verses (4–5) emphasizes. On the other hand, Soma's relationship with the gods, especially Indra, a relationship that figures in every verse, enlarges the conceptual frame of the hymn and keeps it from seeming airless.

1. It purifies itself—the stream of Soma, who has the gaze of men. With truth he summons the gods from heaven.
With the roar of Bṛhaspati he has flashed forth. Like seas they [=the waters?] envelop the pressings.
2. You, o prizewinner, toward whom the cows have bellowed—brilliant, you mount the metal-hammered womb [=cup].
Lengthening the lifetime of the bounteous ones and their great fame, o Soma, for Indra you purify yourself as bullish exhilaration.

3. The most exhilarating one purifies himself in the cheek of Indra, the one of good omen clothing himself in nourishment [=milk], for fame.
He spreads himself out facing toward all creatures. Playful, the tawny bullish steed flows.
4. You, most honeyed, do the men milk for the gods; you of a thousand streams do the ten fingers milk.
O Soma, roused by men, pressed by stones, by purifying yourself bring all the gods here, you winner of thousands.
5. You, honeyed, do those having hands milk with stones; you the bull do the ten fingers milk in the waters.
Exhilarating Indra and the divine race, o Soma, purifying yourself, you rush like the wave of a river.

IX.81 (793) Soma Pavamāna

Vasu Bhāradvāja
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

Attributed to the same poet as the preceding hymn (IX.80), this hymn concerns itself even more strongly with Soma's connection with the gods, devoting the final two verses of a five-verse hymn to a litany of gods invited to the soma sacrifice. The preceding verse contains two occurrences of the word *vásu* "good (one)," which is also the name of the poet. Soma's task of mediating between the world of gods and men is treated in verse 2, anticipating the appeal for his help to the poet in verse 3 and the invitation to the gods in verses 4–5.

1. The bedizened waves of self-purifying soma go forth to the belly of Indra,
when, ladled up with the curds, with the glorious (product) of the cows, the pressings have exhilarated the champion for giving.
2. For soma has flowed to the tubs. Like a steed that pulls (the chariot), the bull has a rapid course,
and knowing of the double birth of gods (and men), he attains to what is from yonder and what from here.
3. O Soma, purifying yourself, scatter goods for us; o drop, become a bounteous (giver) of great largesse.
Conferrer of vigor, do your best for the good one [/Vasu] with your kind attention. Do not pour away your property at a distance from us.
4. Let Pūṣan, self-purifying (Soma), Mitra, and Varuṇa come here in fellowship, bringing us lovely presents—
and Bṛhaspati, the Maruts, Vāyu, the Aśvins, Tvaṣṭar, Savitar, and Sarasvatī, who is easy to guide.

5. Both Heaven and Earth who set all in motion, god Aryaman, Aditi, the Apportioner,
Bhaga, Praise of Men, broad Midspace—all the gods—enjoy the self-purifying one.

IX.82 (794) Soma Pavamāna

Vasu Bhāradvāja
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

The first two verses of this hymn are conventional treatments of Soma's journey across the filter and his mixing with milk (here called ghee). Verse 3, however, is more cryptically phrased, and the name Soma is not mentioned. He appears as a buffalo with feathers and/or leaves, and his father is Parjanya ("thunder"): the image is of a plant produced by the rains. As often, his home is in the mountains, here identified as the navel of the earth. And the rinsing waters, the milk, and the pressing stones of the ritual preparation appear in the second half of the verse. Verse 4 is notable for its 1st-person singular speaker; the abrupt phrase "Listen: I am speaking to you" is reminiscent of the famous command given by the goddess Speech (Vāc) in X.125.4 "Listen to me, you who are listened to. It's a trustworthy thing I tell you." First-person singular speech is quite rare in Maṇḍala IX. The combination of a riddling middle verse and the poet's announcement of his own speech is reminiscent of omphalos hymns, though there is little other support for such a structure.

1. Soma has been pressed—the ruddy, tawny bull. Wondrous like a king, he has roared to the cows.
While being purified, he circles around the sheep's fleece, to sit, like a falcon, on his ghee-filled womb.
2. As a poet with ritual expertise, you circle around the great (filter). Groomed like a steed, you rush to the prize.
Warding off difficulties, o Soma, be merciful. Wearing ghee as your raiment, you drive around.
3. Parjanya is the father of the feathered [/leafy] buffalo. In the navel of the earth, on the mountains he has established his dwelling place.
The sister waters have also flowed to the cows. He will unite with the stones when the ceremony is undertaken.
4. (Kindly) like a wife to her husband, you, kindly one, are generous of yourself. O embryo of the steadfast (earth?), listen: I am speaking to you:
amid the choir I shall advance to good living. O Soma, irreproachable, be watchful in the ritual enclosure [/community].
5. Just as for the earlier ones you encompassed the prize as a winner of hundreds, of thousands, not shirking, o drop,
so purify yourself for renewed good progress. The waters follow your commandment.

IX.83 (795) Soma Pavamāna

Pavitra Āṅgirasa
5 verses: jagatī

A well-known hymn, whose manifold difficulties are also well known. It in many ways resembles the famous Vena hymn, X.123, which also involves a mystical identification between Soma and the sun. The double meanings and enigmas are, as often, fostered by the suppression of overt reference. Crucial verbs lack expressed subjects, and unidentified *asya* "of him/it" substitutes for expressed possession (see 2b, 2c, 3c, 4a). The word *sóma* does not appear in the hymn at all, nor do his common epithets. The hymn has elicited many different and contradictory interpretations, to which we add our own.

Attributed to the same poet as IX.73, this hymn shares with that earlier one the mystical metaphor of the filter (*pavítra*), which is also the name of the poet. Indeed, the words "outstretched" and "filter," construed with each other in the last verse of IX.73 (vs. 9), open this hymn, and the two verses (73.9 and 83.1) both concern the qualities required to attain the filter and what it represents. In this hymn the necessary quality is being cooked, rather than raw; it is somewhat startling to encounter this whiff of Claude Lévi-Strauss very much avant la lettre. In this context "cooked" must refer in the first instance to the ritual preparation of soma. Although this preparation does not involve literal cooking, via application of heat, it clearly turns the raw material extracted from the natural plant into a cultural product, both through physical manipulation and through verbal accompaniment.

But the filter metaphor has a cosmic dimension, as is especially clear in verse 2, where it is compared to the sun with its rays spread across the sky like the tracks of the soma across the filter. The "cooking" of verse 1 provides a neat transition to the "hot one" of verse 2, heat being an obvious characteristic of the sun.

Verse 3 and the first half of verse 4 are quite enigmatic—not surprisingly, given their position in the middle of the hymn. Both the "dappled one" and the "ox" can refer both to the Sun and to Soma, each of whom is also associated with dawn, and the first half of the verse thus continues the Sun/Soma identification of verse 2. The second half of verse 3 appears to contain one of those paradoxes beloved of Ṛgvedic bards. In our (very tentative) interpretation, the forefathers are the ancestral poet-sacrificers or their divine prototypes. They both "set" the embryo of Soma/Sun, that is, engendered it, and they were themselves made into poets by the magic power or artifice (*māyā́*) of the same Soma/Sun. In this way the Soma/Sun is both progenitor of the forefathers in their ritual role and, as they fulfill their ritual role, their child. The identity of the Gandharva in verse 4 is not entirely clear, but on the basis of parallels, especially in the Vena hymn mentioned above, it seems likely that it is again a double reference to Soma and the Sun, each guarding his track (or perhaps the track of the other), thus taking up the theme of the track found in verse 2.

With the second half of verse 4 we return to a much clearer ritual context and to the filter with which we began. The filter traps the impurities of the soma as the liquid passes over it, and the priests attain (a reprise of the verb found twice in vs. 1) the prepared soma. The final verse (5) returns to the 2nd-person address to the ritual Soma, last found in the first half of verse 1. But the Soma thus addressed has achieved a much-elevated status: he is proclaimed a king, outfitted with cosmic garments and traveling a cosmic course, with the filter, the focus of the hymn, as his chariot. The very last words of the hymn attribute to him "lofty fame."

The omphalos structure of the hymn is quite pronounced. The outermost verses (1ab, 5) are couched in the 2nd person and have a clear ritual content, with an inner ring (vss. 1cd/2ab, 4cd) serving as transition between the ritual context and the mystical identifications. There are a number of formal responsions that mark these rings, besides the 2nd versus 3rd person of verses 1 and 5: *pavítram* (1a, 2a) / *pavítra(-ratha)* (5c); *páry eṣi* (1b) / *pári yāsi* (5b); *āśata* (1d, 4d); *padá-* (2a, 4a). Enclosed within these rings are the mysterious and shifting identifications that make the hymn both aggravating and mesmerizing.

1. The filter is outstretched for you, o lord of the sacred formulation.
   Advancing, you circle around its limbs on all sides.
   A raw one, with unheated body, does not attain it [=filter]; only the cooked ones, driving along, have attained it entirely.
2. The filter of the hot one is outstretched to the track of heaven; its blazing threads have been extended.
   His swift (steeds) aid the Purifier. They mount the back of heaven in their manifestation.
3. The dappled one at the front has made the dawns shine. The ox, seeking the prize, bears the worlds.
   They were measured out [=created] as masters of artifice by his artifice; the forefathers having their gaze on men set the embryo.
4. The Gandharva guards his track just so; the infallible one protects the races of the gods.
   The lord of snares [=filter] grasps the defiler with his snare. Those who best perform (ritual) action have attained the draught of honey.
5. You possessor of the oblation, as an oblation yourself you drive around the great heavenly seat, around the ceremonial course, clothing yourself in cloud.
   As king, having the filter as your chariot, you have mounted the prize.
   Having a thousand spikes, you win lofty fame.

IX.84 (796) Soma Pavamāna

Prajāpati Vācya
5 verses: jagatī

Unlike the last hymn, this one concentrates on the preparation of the soma, and, although he has a cosmic dimension (see esp. vs. 2), it is always clear that Soma is the topic and the referent. The most interesting image is found in verse 2, where Soma "performs the knotting and unknotting." On the ritual level, this phrase probably refers to Soma's journey through the tangle of sheep's wool on the filter, but comparison with IX.97.18 suggests that it also has moral force, with Soma separating and distinguishing the straight way from the crooked one.

1. Purify yourself—exhilarating the gods, unbounded, winning the waters—
   for Indra, for Varuṇa, for Vāyu.
   Make for us today wide space accompanied by well-being. Sing to the
   heavenly people in the wide dwelling place.
2. He who has mounted the worlds, immortal Soma flows around them all.
   Performing the knotting and unknotting in order to prevail, the drop
   accompanies (the gods?), like the sun the dawn.
3. He who is sent surging along with the cows onto the plants, prospering in
   the benevolence of the gods, bringing goods near at hand,
   he purifies himself with lightning, pressed in a stream—Soma,
   exhilarating Indra and the heavenly people.
4. This very Soma is purifying himself, thousand-winning, spurring on the
   vigorous speech that awakens at dawn.
   The drop rouses up the sea with his winds; he sits in the heart of Indra in
   the tubs.
5. The cows mix this soma with milk, him who is strengthened by milk—
   with thoughts, him who finds the sun.
   Winning the stakes, getting results, the sap purifies himself—an inspired
   poet, a sage poet through his poetic skill, who delights in the sun.

IX.85 (797) Soma Pavamāna

Vena Bhārgava
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 11–12

The last two hymns of the jagatī group, IX.85–86, break the standard pattern of decreasing numbers of verses, having twelve and forty-eight verses respectively, after a group of hymns with five verses (IX.75–84). However, each of these longer hymns can be divided into a series of shorter ones, which then conform to the patterns of hymn arrangement. In the case of IX.85, it consists of three groups of four verses each. The entire assemblage is attributed to Vena Bhārgava, also the supposed poet

of the enigmatic "Vena" hymn (X.123; see also a brief discussion under IX.83). As we will see, there are certainly striking similarities between the last quartet of IX.85 (vss. 9–12) and X.123.

The first quartet (vss. 1–4) begins with Soma the militant, keeping unworthy and hostile forces at bay and aiding Indra in the same enterprise (vss. 1–2). His relationship to Indra persists in verses 3–4, which show a more positive side of the militant Soma: his status as king (vs. 3) and winner of space for us (vs. 4).

The second section (vss. 5–8) is quite straightforward and focuses on the purification of the soma, deploying the standard tropes.

As noted the final four verses (9–12) strongly resemble the Vena hymn (X.123), but they are considerably easier to decode. They concern heavenly Soma, who is identified with the sun, but who also appears in a number of different guises: a bull, a poet, and a king (all in vs. 9), an ox (vs. 10), an eagle, a child, and a bird (vs. 11), and finally a Gandharva (vs. 12).

1. O Soma, when well pressed, flow around for Indra. Let affliction be gone,
   along with demonic power.
   Let the duplicitous not reach the exhilaration of your sap: let the
   wealth-bringing drops be *here*.
2. Spur us on in the clash, self-purifying one, for you are the skill of the
   gods, their dear exhilarating drink.
   Smash the rivals; (come) here to those seeking blessings. Drink the soma,
   Indra; smash down the scorners for us.
3. Undeceivable, you purify yourself as most exhilarating, o drop; you
   become the very self of Indra, the highest wellspring.
   Many men of inspired thought cry out to him; they seek out the king of
   this creation.
4. Having a thousand channels and a hundred streams, unerring, the drop,
   the desirable honey purifies itself for Indra.
   Winning a dwelling place, winning the waters, rush onward. Make a wide
   course for us, o Soma the rewarder.

5. Ever roaring, you are anointed [/driven] with cows in(to) the tub. You
   rush across the sheep's fleece all at once.
   Constantly being groomed like a winning steed, Soma, you have flowed
   entirely into the belly of Indra.
6. Purify yourself sweet for the heavenly breed, sweet for Indra whose name
   is lovely to call,
   sweet for Mitra, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Bṛhaspati—as the honeyed one not to be
   deceived.
7. The ten fingers groom the steed in the tub. The thoughts, the words of
   the inspired poets press forward.
   Purifying themselves, they rush to the lovely praise hymn. The
   exhilarating drops enter Indra.

8. Purifying yourself, rush to an abundance of heroes, to wide pasturage, to great, extensive shelter.
Let no constricting pressure take control of this (soma) of ours. O drop, with you may we win prize after prize.

9. The wide-gazing bull has mounted heaven. The poet has caused the luminous realms of heaven to shine forth.
The king goes ever bellowing across the filter. Those having the eyes of men milk for themselves the beestings of heaven.

10. In the vault of heaven the seekers milk honey-tongued, inexhaustible (streams) from the mountain-dwelling ox,
the droplet growing strong in the waters, in the sea, the honeyed one in the wave of the river, in the filter.

11. The eagle that has flown to the vault—the many hymns of the trackers yearned after (him).
The thoughts lick the child who always excites wonder, the golden bird standing on the earth.

12. The Gandharva has stood erect upon the vault, gazing upon all his forms.
Radiance has flashed forth with blazing blaze; the blazing one has made the two world-halves, the mothers, shine forth.

IX.86 (798) Soma Pavamāna

Akṛṣṭās, the Māṣā seer-group (1–10); Siktatās, the Nivāvarī seer-group (11–20); Pṛśnis, the Ajā seer-group (21–30); Atris (31–40); Atri Bhauma (41–45); Gṛtsamada (46–48)
48 verses: jagatī, arranged in tṛcas

As noted in the introduction to IX.85, this last hymn of the jagatī group, one of the longest in the Ṛgveda, can actually be easily divided into smaller hymns, in this case into sixteen sets of tṛcas, and can thus be made to conform to the patterns of hymn arrangement. The resulting triadic groupings do not at all match the divisions in the Anukramaṇī reproduced above. The degree of internal cohesion between tṛcas varies considerably: some show no obvious signs of unity, while others (e.g., vss. 28–30) are stylistically unified. There is also some chaining across tṛca boundaries; for example, verse 4, which begins the second tṛca, is strictly parallel to verses 1 and 2 (especially the former). Such chaining is not an argument against the tṛca division, as perceived similarities between particular tṛcas might have dictated the arrangement of originally separate hymns. The last tṛca (vss. 46–48), attributed to Gṛtsamada, ends with the Gṛtsamada clan refrain of Maṇḍala II.

That said, the impression this sprawling collection gives is of an agglomeration of soma-hymn clichés, many of which are repeated with little or no variation at irregular intervals throughout the "hymn."

1. Forth do your swift exhilarating drinks, sped by insights, rush, o self-purifying one, like the swift-born (birds) themselves.
The heavenly, fine-feathered, honeyed drops, most exhilarating, take their seats around the cask.

2. Forth have your swift, exhilarating, invigorating drinks surged, like chariot-horses, each separately.
As a milk-cow (goes) to her calf with milk, the drops, the honeyed waves (go) to Indra, possessor of the mace.

3. Like a steed being spurred, rush to the prize, to the cask of heaven, whose mother is the stone—
you, the finder of the sun, the bullish Soma, being purified in the filter, on the sheep's back, for Indra's suckling.

4. Forth have your heavenly (hymns), sped by insight, destined for the Aśvins, surged with their milk into the support, o self-purifying one.
Forth within (the support) have the seers sent their substantial (hymns) surging—those ritual experts who groom you, o you who win seers [?].

5. Your beacons circle around all the domains, though you are in advance—you ingenious one whose gaze is on all.
Reaching through (the domains), you purify yourself, Soma, according to your ordinances. You rule as lord of all creation.

6. The rays, the beacons of the self-purifying one circle around on both sides, though he stays fixed.
When the fallow bay is groomed in the filter, seated in his womb, he sits down in the tubs.

7. Beacon of the sacrifice, lovely at the ceremony, he purifies himself. Soma proceeds toward the rendezvous with the gods.
Having a thousand streams, he rushes around the cask. The bull keeps bellowing as he goes across the filter.

8. The king plunges through the sea, the rivers. Fixed in the streams he accompanies the wave of waters.
The self-purifying one has mounted upon the sheep's back, on the navel of the earth, as buttress of great heaven.

9. Thundering like the back of heaven he has roared, he according to whose ordinances both heaven and earth (abide).
He purifies himself, always finding the fellowship of Indra. Soma, while being purified, sits in the tubs.

10. Light of the sacrifice, he purifies himself as its dear honey, the father, begetter of the gods, possessing conspicuous goods.
He establishes a secret treasure in the two independent powers [=Heaven and Earth], as the most invigorating exhilarating Indrian sap.

11. Roaring toward the tub, the prize-seeker rushes, the lord of heaven with his hundred streams, wide-gazing.
The fallow bay sits in the seats of Mitra, the bull constantly being groomed by the sheep, the streams.
12. At the forefront of the rivers, purifying himself he rushes; at the forefront of speech he goes foremost among the cows.
At the forefront of the prize(-contest) he takes great stakes as his share. The bull of good weapons is purified by the pressers.

13. This one here, accompanied by thought, like a bird spurred on has run into the sheep's (fleece), purifying himself in a wave.
By your resolve, o sage poet, by your insight, the clear Soma purifies himself between the two world-halves for you, o Indra.
14. Clothing himself in a mantle that touches heaven, the one worthy of the sacrifice, filling the midspace, is fitted into the worlds.
While being born, he has stridden along the cloud toward the sun; he wishes to entice his age-old father here.
15. He extends his great shelter to the clan, when he has reached through his first domain.
What is his footprint in the highest distant heaven—from that he proceeds toward all the (streams) in uninterrupted array.

16. Forth has the drop proceeded to the rendezvous with Indra: a comrade does not transgress against an agreement with his comrade.
As a young blood rushes together with young women, so does Soma—into the tub, along a path with a hundred courses.
17. Forth have your insights stridden, arousing exhilaration, expressing admiration, inviting admiration in their joint dwellings.
The inspired thoughts, the rhythms have roared to Soma; the milk-cows have mixed him with milk.
18. O Soma, o drop, purifying yourself, bring us continuous, swelling, unfailing refreshment by purifying yourself,
(refreshment) that, never drying up, will milk out for us three times a day an abundance of good heroes, along with cattle, prizes, and honey.

19. The bull of the thoughts, wide gazing, purifies himself—Soma, the lengthener of day, of dawn, of heaven.
Through the action of the rivers he has made the tubs bellow, entering the heart of Indra through (the action of) the inspired ones.
20. Through the inspired ones the primordial poet purifies himself; guided by men he has roared around the casks.
Engendering the name of Trita, he flows as honey, to create the partnership of Indra and Vāyu.

21. This one here, being purified, has made the dawns shine widely; this one has become the maker of wide space for the rivers.
This one, having milked thrice seven (cows) for his own milk-mixture—the exhilarating Soma purifies himself in a way dear to the heart.

22. Purify yourself, Soma, in the heavenly domains, surging into the tub, into the filter, o drop.
Sitting in the belly of Indra, ever roaring, guided by the men, you have made the sun mount in heaven.
23. Pressed by the stones, you purify yourself in the filter, o drop, entering the belly of Indra.
You have become one whose gaze is on men, wide-gazing one. Soma, you opened up the cowpen for the Aṅgirases.
24. You, o Soma, purifying yourself, do the very attentive poets applaud as they seek help.
You did the fine-feathered (falcon) carry here from heaven, o drop, you who are adorned all over with all thoughts.

25. Seven milk-cows roar toward the tawny one being purified on the sheep's fleece in a wave all around.
Into the lap of the waters, into the womb of truth have the Āyus, the buffaloes propelled the poet.
26. The drop being purified plunges beyond the scorners, making all paths good for the worshipful one.
Making the cows into his raiment, the delightful poet, playful like a steed, rushes around the fleece.
27. Inexhaustible, possessing a hundred streams, excelling in beauty [/serving as mixture], they [=mixing waters] roar down to the tawny one as they provide water.
The fingers groom him wreathed with cows, on the third back, in the luminous realm of heaven.

28. Yours are these offspring of the heavenly semen; you rule over all creation.
And all this here is under your will, self-purifying one. You are the foremost founder of foundations, o drop.
29. You are the sea, o poet, the all-knowing [/-finding] one; yours are these five regions in your [/their] expansion.
You have carried yourself beyond heaven and earth; yours are the lights, self-purifying one, and the sun.
30. You, o self-purifying Soma, are purified for the gods in the filter, in the expansion of space.
You did the fire-priests first grasp; to you have all these worlds submitted themselves.

31. The husky-voiced one goes forth across the sheep's fleece; the tawny bull has roared down into the woods [/wooden vessels].
The hymnic visions, bellowing [/in their longing], have roared together. The thoughts lick the child who always excites wonder.
32. He has enveloped himself with the rays of the sun, stretching his own threefold thread, in the way that is known.
Leading the newer directives of truth, as a husband he proceeds to the rendezvous with his wives.
33. The king of rivers, the lord of heaven purifies himself. He proceeds along the paths of truth, ever roaring.
The tawny one is poured around with his thousand streams as he is being purified, begetting speech, bringing goods near at hand.

34. Purifying yourself as a great flood, brilliant like the sun, you run across the fleecy filters.
Hand-purified by the men, pressed by the stones, you dash for the great rich prize.
35. Self-purifying one, you rush toward refreshment and nourishment. Like a falcon in the woods, you sit in the tubs.
For Indra is pressed the exhilarative, exhilarating drink of exhilaration, the utmost prop of heaven, wide-gazing.
36. The seven sisters, as mothers, (go) to the newborn child of worthy birth, who is attentive to poetic inspiration,
the heavenly Gandharva of the waters, whose gaze is on men—to Soma, for the regulation of all creation.

37. Showing mastery, you speed across these worlds here, o drop, having hitched up your golden fine-feathered (mares).
Let them stream honeyed ghee and milk for you. O Soma, let the separate peoples stay under your commandment.
38. You, Soma, are one whose gaze is on men on every side. Purifying yourself, bull, you run across these (worlds).
Purify yourself in a manner rich in goods and gold for us. May we be (fit) to live in the worlds.
39. Purify yourself, as finder of cattle, of goods, of gold. Depositing seed, o drop, you are fitted into the worlds.
You, Soma, are rich in good heroes, finder of all [/all-knowing]. These inspired poets here reverently approach you with a hymn.

40. The wave of honey has raised (our?) desires; clothing himself in waters, the buffalo plunges through them.
The king whose chariot is the filter has mounted the prize. He of a thousand spikes wins lofty fame.
41. He rouses all blessings, consisting of offspring and easy to bear, through our whole lifetime, day upon day.

Then, o drop, when drunk, on our behalf beg Indra for a sacred formulation bringing offspring and for wealth consisting of horses in the homestead.
42. At the vanguard of the days [=dawn] the tawny, delightful, exhilarating drink makes himself conspicuous with his appearance through the days.
Setting in place the two peoples [=gods and men], he speeds between them in upholding the "praise of men" and the heavenly (praise).

43. They anoint him—anoint him separately and jointly. They lick (him who is) resolve; they anoint him with honey—
him, the ox flying in the burbling up of the river. (The waters,) who purify the gold (of soma), grasp the stock-animal within themselves.
44. Sing to the self-purifying one who is attentive to poetic inspiration. Like a great stream he rushes beyond his stalk;
like a snake he slinks beyond his withered skin. Playful like a steed, the tawny bull has run.
45. Going in the vanguard, the king who is found in the waters displays his power, the measure(r) of the days, fitted into the worlds.
The ghee-backed fallow bay, a flood lovely to see, having light as his chariot, accustomed to wealth, purifies himself.

46. It has been sent surging—the prop of heaven, the exhilarating drink held aloft. It rushes threefold around the worlds.
The thoughts lick the plant that always excites wonder, when the versifiers have come to array it with a hymn.
47. Your streams go forth beyond the fine (hairs) of the ewe; as you are being purified, there go continuous charges.
When, o drop, you are anointed with cows in the two cups, being pressed you sit in the tubs, Soma.
48. Purify yourself, Soma, finding the will, to be hymned by us. Run around in the sheep's fleece as dear honey.
Smite all rapacious demons, o drop. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

Triṣṭubh Hymns: 87–97

IX.87 (799) Soma Pavamāna

Uśanas Kāvya
9 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn, attributed to Uśanas Kāvya (perhaps because of the mention of that figure in vs. 3), is built in part of standard soma-hymn tropes, but the militant

Soma is particularly on view (vss. 2, 7), as well as his association with Indra (vss. 4, 8, 9). There are also the faintest sketches of Soma's participation in well-known myths: the Vala myth (vs. 3cd, where Soma is credited with finding the cows), the falcon's stealing of soma from heaven (vs. 6c), and the dog Saramā's role in the recovery of the cows in the Vala myth (vs. 8ab).

This last example neatly shows the integration of ritual and mythic themes. The first half of the verse, which alludes to the myth, does not identify the grammatical subject by name or attribute, but does use a pronoun to mark it as female. This might seem to exclude Soma as the referent—until we reach the final word of the verse: *dhā́rā* "stream," a feminine noun regularly used of the "stream of soma," which does allow the identification. From the mythological point of view, the dog Saramā comes out of the mountain and finds the cows in the cave; in ritual terms the (feminine) stream of soma comes out of the pressing apparatus and mixes with the cows' milk in the vessel. And this superimposition of ritual upon myth allows Soma, indirectly, to be identified as the rescuer of the cows himself, as in verse 3.

1. Run forth around the cask; sit down; being purified by men, rush to the prize.
   Grooming you like a prizewinning horse, they lead you toward the ritual grass with reins.
2. He of good weapons, the god, the drop purifies himself, smiting malediction, protecting the community,
   the father, begetter of the gods, possessing good skill, prop of heaven, buttress of the earth.
3. Seer, inspired poet, going in front of the people, an insightful craftsman [/Ṛbhu], Uśanā in poetic skill—
   only he found what of theirs was deposited, the secret, hidden name of the cows.
4. This very one, honeyed Soma, has flowed for you, Indra, a bull for a bull, around in the filter.
   Thousand-winning, hundred-winning, much-giving, the prizewinner has mounted the ritual grass ever and always.
5. These soma drinks have been sent surging toward bovine thousands, toward acclamations, for great immortal reward,
   being purified by the filters—like fame-seeking steeds driving to battle.
6. Because, much invoked of the peoples, he has flowed around all nourishments while being purified—
   now bring pleasurable things, you falcon-brought one; thrusting out wealth, rush to the prize.
7. This Soma being pressed, the steed like a surge sent surging, has run around in the filter,
   whetting his sharp horns like a buffalo, on a cow-hunt toward cows, like a champion warrior.

8. This one traveled from within the highest stone [=mountain]; she found the cows that were somewhere in the enclosure.
   Like lightning from heaven thundering with the clouds, the stream of soma purifies itself for you, Indra.
9. And now while being purified, Soma, you drive around a throng of cows in the same chariot with Indra,
   and around many lofty refreshments, you of lively drops. Do your best, able one. These (refreshments? verses?) are your invitatory praise.

IX.88 (800) Soma Pavamāna

Uśanas Kāvya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is structured by a series of similes; only the first verse lacks an explicit simile. Many of the similes also involve identification of Soma with other divinities (see esp. vss. 3–5, 7), and so the powers and mythological deeds of these gods are implicitly attributed to Soma by way of these comparisons.

The two outer verses (1, 8) are complementary to each other. The first is addressed to Indra and announces the soma as distinctively his, while verse 8, emphasizing the 2nd-person pronoun as verse 1 did, declares that to Soma belong the distinctive qualities and attainments of the Ādityas.

1. This soma is pressed for you, Indra; for you it purifies itself. You—drink of it—
   the one that you have made your own, that you have chosen, the drop, the soma to be yoked for exhilaration.
2. It has been yoked, like a chariot that conquers much, as the great one to win many goods.
   Therefore, all creatures stemming from Nahus, standing upright beside the wood(en cup), roar at him at the winning of the sun.
3. You, who like Vāyu with his team maintain your desired course, who like the Nāsatyas are most availing at a summons,
   who like the Treasure-Giver in person bring all desirable things—like Pūṣan you give speed to insight, o Soma.
4. You, who like Indra are a doer of great deeds, are a stronghold-splitting smiter of obstacles, Soma.
   Because, like Pedu's (horse), (you are the smiter) of those with serpents' names, you are the smiter of every Dasyu, Soma.
5. He who, like Agni in the wood, is being set loose in the wood(en cup), he deploys his full dimensions in the rivers at will.
   Like people battling is the trampling of the great one. Self-purifying Soma raises a wave.

6. These soma juices have surged across the sheep's fleeces—they are like the heavenly buckets that hold the rain from clouds—
toward the tubs at will when pressed, like rivers downward to the sea.
7. Tempestuous like the troop of Maruts, purify yourself, impervious to calumny like that heavenly clan.
Quickly become benevolence for us, having a thousand ripples like the waters, like a sacrifice that conquers in battles.
8. The commandments of King Varuṇa are yours; yours is his lofty, deep domain, o Soma.
You are blazing pure, like dear Mitra. You are besought for skill like Aryaman, o Soma.

IX.89 (801) Soma Pavamāna

Uśanas Kāvya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The standard tropes of soma preparation, the swelling of Soma in water, his manipulation by the priests' fingers, his journey across the filter, and his mixing with milk, provide the subject of this hymn, but, as often, each of these depictions has a cosmic dimension—as in verses 1–2, where Soma is compared with heavenly rain.

1. This draft-horse has streamed forth along the paths. Like the rain from heaven, the self-purifying one has flowed.
Having a thousand streams, he has taken his seat by us, in the lap of his mother, and in the wood: Soma.
2. The king of rivers has donned his garment. He has boarded the ship of truth, (which goes) the straightest.
The drop, sped by the falcon, has grown strong in the waters. His father yields him as milk; he yields as milk the offspring of his father.
3. They [=waters or cows] draw near the unbridled lion of honey, the tawny, ruddy master of this heaven.
The champion, first in battles, asks for the cows for himself. The young bull protects them all around with his gaze.
4. The honey-backed, terrible, unbridled horse—they yoke that towering one to the wide-wheeled chariot.
His sisters, his kin, groom him. Those who share an umbilical bond nourish the prizewinner.
5. Set down within the same support, four, yielding ghee as their milk, accompany him.
They rush, being purified with homage. They, the many, surround him on all sides.

6. (He is) the prop of heaven, the support of the earth, and all the dwelling places are in his hand.
Your wellspring will provide (horse-)teams to the singer. The plant of honey purifies itself for Indrian power.
7. Vanquishing but unvanquished, o Soma, as Vṛtra-smasher purify yourself for Indra and to pursue the gods.
Have mastery over great, much-glittering wealth. Might we be lords of an abundance of heroes.

IX.90 (802) Soma Pavamāna

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Attributed to Vasiṣṭha, the poet of the VIIth Maṇḍala, this hymn ends (vs. 6d) with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain, encountered constantly in VII. Martial images dominate, starting with verse 1 and showcased especially in verse 3 (see also 4cd and 5ab). The aim of war, to secure peace and prosperity, is depicted in the center of the hymn (vs. 4ab). Some of the divine beneficiaries of Soma's invigorating capability are listed in verse 5.

1. Being propelled, the begetter of the two worlds has driven forth like a chariot, striving to win the prize,
going to Indra, sharpening his weapons, taking all goods in his hands.
2. Toward the three-backed bull, who imparts vitality, have the voices of the songs bellowed.
Clothing himself in the woods, like Varuṇa in the rivers, the conferrer of treasures distributes desirable things.
3. Having a horde of champions, having hale heroes, purify yourself as victorious conqueror and winner of stakes,
with your sharp weapons and snapping bows invincible in combats, vanquishing your rivals in battles.
4. Providing broad pastures, creating (places) without danger, by purifying yourself procure the two united forms of plenty [=Heaven and Earth].
Striving to win the waters, also the dawns, the sun, and the cows, you have roared together great prizes for us.
5. Exhilarate Varuṇa, o Soma; exhilarate Mitra. Exhilarate Indra, o self-purifying drop, and Viṣṇu.
Exhilarate the troop of Maruts; exhilarate the gods. Exhilarate great Indra, o drop, for his exhilaration.
6. In this way, like a king full of resolve, ever smiting all obstacles to progress with your onslaught, purify yourself.
O drop, impart vitality to our speech. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

IX.91 (803) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The first three verses of this hymn concentrate on the journey of the soma across the filter toward the mixing milk and toward Indra, but the militancy characteristic of the previous hymn (IX.90) asserts itself in verse 4. The final two verses (5–6) ask for bounties and blessings in return for our verbal and ritual service.

1. Billowing, he has been let loose as if at a chariot contest—the foremost inspired thinker with his insight.
   The ten sisters drive the draft-horse on the sheep's back toward the seats.
2. In pursuit of the heavenly race, the drop is being pressed on (it [=fleece]) by the poets, the sons of Nahus,
   the drop that is constantly being groomed (to go) forth by men—by mortals as the immortal—by the sheep, the cows, and the waters.
3. The bull roaring over and over to the bull [=Indra], the plant, purifying itself for him, moves toward the gleaming white milk of the cow.
   A versifier who knows speech, the sun travels widely across the fine (fleece) by a thousand unbesmirched paths.
4. Shatter even the entrenched seats of the demon. While being purified, o drop, uncover the prizes of victory.
   Hew down from above with your thrusting weapon the one who led here from afar those (enemies) who are (now) nearby.
5. As of old, make forward-facing paths for our newer hymn, o you who grant all wishes.
   Lofty (riches?), which are hard to capture by the covetous—might we attain them from you, o you who do many things and have many cattle.
6. Becoming purified in just this way, (grant) waters, the sun, and cattle to us, and ample progeny and posterity,
   luck, broad dominion, and lights to us, o Soma—grant that we may see the sun for a long time.

IX.92 (804) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Like many hymns in the IXth Maṇḍala this hymn describes Soma's journey, but here the focus is on the endpoint, on Soma's reaching his goal and taking his seat in the vessels: the "seat" theme is found in three of the six verses (2, 3, 6). Soma is also a poet (vs. 2) and surrounded by poetry (vs. 3). It is this association with the *kaví*, the sage poet and master of words, that probably prompted the most striking statement in the hymn, that all the gods are "in your secret" (vs. 4). This statement comes in the middle of the hymn and may constitute a weak omphalos, especially as it is embedded in a series of verses that play with numbers (2–4), often a sign of an omphalos structure.

1. The tawny one, the plant, being pressed, is sent surging all around in the filter, like a chariot being urged on to win.
   He will achieve a signal-call meant for Indra as he is being purified. He has returned the favor to the gods through his pleasurable offerings.
2. His gaze on men, he has run here, acquiring the name "poet" in the filter, in his womb,
   taking his seat in the cups, like a Hotar on his seat. The seven inspired seers have approached him.
3. The very wise pathfinder who belongs to all the gods, Soma as he is being purified goes forth to his very own seat.
   He is one to take his rest amid all the poems. Steadfast, he arranges himself throughout the five peoples.
4. O self-purifying Soma, it is in your secret that all these gods are, the three times eleven.
   The ten (fingers) with their autonomous powers, the seven exuberant streams groom you upon the sheep's back.
5. Now, let this be true of the self-purifying one, this on which all the bards concur:
   that he made light for the day and wide space; he furthered Manu but made close quarters for the Dasyu.
6. Circling around, like a Hotar circling the seats provided with (sacrificial) animals, going to assemblies like a true king,
   Soma being purified has traveled to the tubs, taking his seat like a wild buffalo in the woods [/wooden cups].

IX.93 (805) Soma Pavamāna

Nodhas Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Attributed to Nodhas Gautama, the poet of I.58–64, this hymn ends with the clan refrain found in most of those Ist Maṇḍala hymns, although it does not display the virtuosity characteristic of those compositions. The first three verses concern the journey of the soma to the vessels and the mixing with water and with milk. The last two (4–5) are requests for bounties.

1. The ten sisters, grown strong all together, the insightful thoughts of the insightful one, the runners, groomed (him).
   The tawny offspring of the sun dashed around (the filter). He reached the wooden cup like a prizewinning steed.
2. Like a calf bellowing along with the mothers, the bull of many favors [/tail hairs] has run together with the waters.
   Like a young blood going to a maiden at the trysting place, he comes together with the ruddy (cows) in the tub.
3. And the udder of the inviolable cow has swelled forth; the drop of good wisdom is accompanied by streams.
   The cows prepare his head with their milk in the cups, as if with freshly washed goods.
4. O self-purifying drop, along with the gods excavate wealth in horses for us as you bellow.
   Let Plenitude come eagerly on her chariot in our direction, for the giving of goods.
5. Now, as you are being purified, mete out to us all-glittering wealth, abounding in superior men, befriended by the wind [/whose friendship is sought].
   The lifetime of the extoller has been extended, o drop. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, bringing goods through his insight.

IX.94 (806) Soma Pavamāna

Kaṇva Ghaura
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The word *sóma* does not appear until the last pāda (5d) of this hymn, which plots a sometimes difficult course to this ending. The hymn features similes that exploit idiomatic ambiguity to produce different meanings in the simile proper and the frame (see esp. vss. 1 and 3) and by obscure turns of phrase (see esp. 4d). It is therefore not surprising that, as in IX.92, Soma is identified as a *kaví*, a poet, enmeshed in poetry (vs. 3), and the main focus of the hymn, especially in the first three verses, is the interchange between the poetic products of the mortal participants in ritual and those of Soma himself.

1. When the insightful thoughts contend over him, like adornments upon a prizewinner, like the clans over the sun,
   choosing the waters, he purifies himself, poetically crafting a thought like a stable for the raising of livestock,
2. Once again disclosing the domain of the immortal one. The worlds spread out for the finder of the sun.
   The insightful thoughts, swelling like cows in good pasture, acting with truth, have bellowed to the drop,
3. When the poet encompasses (all) poems, as a champion chariot [/the chariot of the *Sun] (encircles) all the worlds,
   exerting himself among the gods for glory for the mortal, for his skill exerting himself anew for riches among (the gods) of much exertion.
4. Born for splendor, he has come forth from splendor; he establishes splendor and vitality for the singers.
   Clothed in splendor, they have gone to immortality. Their encounters come to pass beside the one of measured pace [=Agni].
5. Rush to refreshment and nourishment, to horse and cow. Make broad light; exhilarate the gods.
   Because all these things are easy to conquer for you, o self-purifying Soma, you repel the rivals.

IX.95 (807) Soma Pavamāna

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
5 verses: triṣṭubh

As in the preceding hymn, IX.94, the complementarity and interaction between Soma's poetic efforts and those of the ritualists provide the subject of this hymn. Soma's speech is the topic of the first two verses, culminating in 2cd in his revelation of the "hidden names of the gods" that will be proclaimed aloud on the ritual ground. But the verbal compositions of the mortals take center stage in verses 3–4. In the final verse (5), Soma both prompts the speech of others and (it seems) produces his own.

1. The tawny one keeps roaring as he is being set loose, as he is sitting in the belly of the wood, as he is being purified.
   Guided by men, he makes cows his raiment. Thereupon he generates poetic thoughts through his own powers.
2. The tawny one, having been set loose on the path of truth, directs his speech, like an oarsman his boat.
   The god reveals the hidden names of the gods to be proclaimed on the ritual grass.
3. Constantly overtaking each other like the waves of the waters, the inspired thoughts press forward to Soma.
   Doing homage, they come close to him and come together with him, and desirous they enter him, who is also desirous.
4. They milk him, constantly being groomed like a buffalo on the back (of the filter), the plant, the mountain-dwelling ox.
   The poetic thoughts accompany him as he bellows. Trita carries Varuṇa in the sea.

5. Inciting speech, as the Upavaktar incites the speech of the Hotar, while being purified, o drop, unleash the inspired thought.
Since (you) and Indra have the power for good fortune, might we be lords of an abundance of heroes.

IX.96 (808) Soma Pavamāna

Pratardana Daivodāsi
24 verses: triṣṭubh

This twenty-four-verse hymn, immediately following three five-verse hymns in the same meter, can easily be made to fit the sequence if it is analyzed as consisting of a collection of four-verse hymns, as Oldenberg clearly states (1888: 201). The six hymns thus obtained show different degrees of internal cohesion.

For example, the first four verses display clear thematic unity and development. The first verse is explicitly martial, with Soma as a warrior about to charge, a picture continued in the following verse. In verse 3 he achieves one of the most desired results of Vedic warfare, wide space for us to inhabit, and with this obtained, verse 4 articulates a counter-message, that of peace and nonviolence. Indra is explicitly mentioned in the first three verses, and comradeship is a central theme, as is seen in verses 1, 2, and 4.

The second hymn (vss. 5–8) shows stylistic progression. It begins with a rhetorically restricted verse (5), consisting primarily of seven repetitions of the word "begetter" with different genitive complements. The next verse (6) continues the dominantly nominal construction of vs. 5, but with a more varied verbal repertoire, though the nominative-genitive syntagm persists. Verse 7 continues to describe the qualities and characteristic actions of Soma, in the 3rd person, though it abandons the strict nominal style. And finally vs. 8 breaks out into the dynamic 2nd person and imperative mood.

The third group (vss. 9–12) ends with a characteristic hymn-final summary verse, which seems to mark a decisive break from what follows. Although no clear thematic unity imposes itself on the four verses, the focus on Soma's relationship with our ancestral ritualists and our hope that this relationship will continue fruitfully is noticeable, especially in the last two verses (11–12). On the other hand, it is difficult to identify any unifying features in the next group of four (vss. 13–16), which consist primarily of standard soma-hymn tropes. In verses 17–20 Soma as poet (esp. in vss. 17–18) and his journey from the filter to the cups provide a weak cohesion. In the final group (vss. 21–24), three verses (22–24) contain courtship imagery, and the root *krand* "roar" is prominent.

1. The army-leader, the champion, at the forefront of the chariots, goes forth seeking cattle. His army bristles with excitement.

Making the invocations of Indra beneficial for his comrades, Soma puts on his ravishing garments.

2. The tawny ones [=fingers] jointly groom his tawny (horse), without resting, with acts of reverence that spur on the horse.
The comrade of Indra mounts the chariot; the knowing one drives with him to our good thought.

3. Purify yourself, o god, for the conclave of gods, for great delight, o Soma, as Indra's drink.
Creating the waters and making this heaven rain, from the wide (realm) make wide space for us as you are being purified.

4. For freedom from overthrow and freedom from assault purify yourself, for well-being, for lofty wholeness.
This do all these comrades desire; this do I desire, o self-purifying Soma.

5. Soma purifies himself—the begetter of poetic thoughts, begetter of heaven, begetter of earth,
begetter of Agni, begetter of the sun, begetter of Indra, and begetter of Viṣṇu.

6. Formulator for the gods, trail-blazer for the sage poets, seer for the inspired poets, buffalo of the wild beasts,
falcon of the birds of prey, axe of the trees—Soma goes rasping through the filter.

7. Like a river its wave, self-purifying Soma has sent the wave of speech pulsing forth, the hymns, the inspired thoughts.
Looking within, he surmounts these communities here below, a bull among the cows, recognizing them.

8. Exhilarating, vanquishing in battles but unvanquished, thousand-spurting—rush to the prize.
Purifying yourself for Indra, o drop, as inspired thinker raise a wave from the plant, driving the cows.

9. The dear Soma, sought by the gods, (goes) around in the tub, the enjoyable one for Indra's exhilaration.
The drop of a thousand streams, a hundred prizes, goes like a prizewinning team to the concourses.

10. The primordial one, finding goods (even) while being born, being groomed in the waters, being milked on the stone,
protecting from imprecations, the king of creation, he finds the way for the sacred formulation as he is being purified.

11. Because with you, self-purifying Soma, our insightful forefathers performed their (ritual) acts,
open up the barriers, vanquishing but unvanquished; become a benefactor to us with heroes and with horses.

12. Even as you purified yourself for Manu, as conferrer of vitality, smiter of foes, finder of wide space, accompanied by oblations,
just so purify yourself now, conferring wealth. Stand side-by-side by Indra. Generate weapons.

13. Purify yourself, Soma, rich in honey, following the truth, clothing yourself in waters, on the sheep's back.
Sit down in the cups full of ghee as the most elating, exhilarating drink for Indra.

14. Having a hundred streams, purify yourself into the rain from heaven—thousand-winning, seeking the prize in pursuit of the gods,
bellowing along with the rivers in the tub, along with the ruddy (cows), prolonging our lifetime.

15. This very Soma, being purified by poetic thoughts, like a prizewinning steed just outstrips hostilities.
Like the milk milked out of Aditi, it is invigorating, broad like a way, like a draft-horse easy to control.

16. Having good weapons, being purified by the pressers, rush to the dear hidden name (of the cows? of Indra?),
to the prize, like a team with desire for fame, to Vāyu, to the cows, o god Soma.

17. The colt just born, the delightful one they groom; the Maruts in a flock beautify the cart horse.
Though being a poet by virtue of his hymns, a poet by his poetry, Soma goes rasping across the filter.

18. Having the mind of a seer, a maker of seers, gaining the sun, having a thousand devices, trail-blazer for poets,
a buffalo, seeking to gain the third domain, Soma, as rhythm [/the anuṣṭubh meter], regulates the virāj (meter) according to rule.

19. Sitting in the cups, the falcon, the bird spreading (his wings), the cow-finding drop, bearing weapons,
accompanying the wave of the waters, the buffalo declares the sea to be the fourth domain.

20. Like a resplendent young blood grooming his own body, like a steed running to gain the stakes,
charging around the cask like a bull around the herds, constantly roaring he has entered the two cups.

21. Purify yourself, o drop, as self-purifying one, with your mighty powers. Constantly roaring, rush around the fleeces.
Playing, enter the two cups while being purified. Let your exhilarating sap exhilarate Indra.

22. His lofty streams have been sent surging forth. Anointed with cows he has entered the tubs.

Making a melody [/performing the sāman], devoted to a melody [/the sāman], attentive to poetic inspiration, roaring he goes as if to a comrade's sister.

23. Smiting aside the rivals, self-purifying one, you go like a swain to his beloved, the drop besung.
Sitting in the woods like a flying bird, Soma, being purified, has settled in the tubs.

24. As you purify yourself, Soma, your beams come here like a maiden—the good milkers giving good streams.
The fallow bay granting many favors, led hither into the waters, has roared in the tub of those who seek the gods.

IX.97 (809) Soma Pavamāna

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi 1–3, Indrapramati Vāsiṣṭha 4–6, Vṛṣagaṇa Vāsiṣṭha 7–9, Manyu Vāsiṣṭha 10–12, Upamanyu Vāsiṣṭha 13–15, Vyāghrapād Vāsiṣṭha 16–18, Śakti Vāsiṣṭha 19–21, Karṇaśrut Vāsiṣṭha 22–24, Mṛḷīka Vāsiṣṭha 25–27, Vasukra Vāsiṣṭha 28–30, Parāśara Śāktya 31–44, Kutsa Āṅgirasa 45–58
58 verses: triṣṭubh, arranged in tṛcas

This is the longest hymn in the Ṛgveda, consisting of fifty-eight verses, arranged in three-verse units. It is also the last IXth Maṇḍala hymn in triṣṭubh. Despite its extraordinary length, it can be analyzed as consisting of a series of originally independent tṛcas combined into one, and it therefore conforms to the prevailing principles of arrangement in the Saṃhitā. In the first half (vss. 1–30) each tṛca is attributed to Vasiṣṭha or to a different Vasiṣṭhid; the second half is divided between two, non-Vasiṣṭhid, poets. If we assume that the tṛca division continues in this second half (as most scholars do), the Anukramaṇī ascription does not conform to the tṛca division, as the first two verses of the tṛca of verses 43–45 are credited to Parāśara Śāktya and the last one to Kutsa Āṅgirasa. There is also an extra verse, most probably the final one (58), which contains the Kutsa refrain of Maṇḍala I (I.94.16cd, etc.). Although according to the Anukramaṇī each of these poets is responsible for fourteen verses, there is no more apparent unity in these larger stretches than in the individual tṛcas of the first half.

As is often the case in such long, composite hymns, the tṛcas exhibit varying degrees of cohesiveness, from the tight and emphatic verbal repetitions of verses 49–51 to the diffuseness of groupings like verses 7–9, 40–42. Some of the tṛcas, though not thematically or verbally unified, have a third verse that marks it as final; for instance, the first two tṛcas (vss. 1–3, 4–6) each end with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain as the last pāda, and the final verse of three tṛcas begins with a summary *evá* "thus" (vss. 13–15, 19–21, 25–27), a word characteristic of final verses.

As might be expected, the contents of this hymn are also extremely various, but generally exhibit the standard tropes of soma hymns: the mechanisms of

soma preparation, including the journey across the filter and the mixing with waters and with milk; the power of soma to incite the gods, especially Indra, and the power of the ritualists and, especially, the poets, to strengthen the soma for this task; and the rewards the ritualists will receive from properly preparing the soma. Nonetheless, the hymn contains a number of striking similes and metaphors, and some passages of great difficulty, chief among which is the tṛca of verses 52–54, which may (or may not) be a dānastuti and whose translation here is provisional in places. Note also verse 38, which in our interpretation contains an archaic formula denoting an archaic figure, the "Placer of the Sun" (see Jamison 2010).

1. Being purified by his impulsion, his drive, the god has intermingled his sap with the gods.
   Pressed, he goes rasping around the filter like the Hotar around the fixed seats provided with (sacrificial) animals.
2. Wearing auspicious festival garments, as a great poet pronouncing enigmas,
   coil yourself into the two cups while being purified, wide-gazing and watchful in the pursuit of the gods.
3. The dear one is groomed on the sheep's back, the more glorious of the glorious ones, a fellow countryman at our side.
   Cry out, run, as you are being purified. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

4. Sing forth: let us recite to the gods. Impel Soma for great stakes.
   The sweet one will purify himself across the sheep's fleece. He will sit in the tub, seeking the gods for us.
5. The drop, coming here to fellowship with the gods, purifies himself in a thousand streams for exhilaration.
   Being praised by men, he has gone along his earlier domain, to Indra for great good portion.
6. As a fallow bay, rush for wealth for the praiser as you are being purified. Let your exhilarating drink go to Indra for the taking.
   Drive on the same chariot with the gods to bounty. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

7. Speaking forth his poetry like Uśanā, the god proclaims the races of the gods.
   Of great commandment, of blazing lineage, pure, as a boar he goes rasping toward his tracks.
8. The geese have journeyed forth to (Soma's) sharp battle-fury, from nearby to their home, in a bullish flock.
   The comrades speak in unison to the self-purifying one a songful music difficult to forget.

9. He hastens at the pace of the wide-ranging one [=Viṣṇu?]. The cows, as they seem to bellow, give their measure to the one who plays at will [=Soma].
   The sharp-horned one makes himself an ample (face). By day he appears tawny, but silvery by night.

10. The prizewinning drop purifies himself, bringing cows down in flood—Soma stimulating the power in Indra, for exhilaration.
    He smashes demonic force; he deflects hostilities, making wide space as king of the community.
11. Then being infused with honey in a stream, he purifies himself across the fleece, when he has been milked by the stone,
    the drop enjoying the fellowship of Indra, the god, the exhilarating drink of the god, for exhilaration.
12. He purifies himself toward his own dear (tracks?), while being purified, the god infusing the gods with his own sap.
    The drop, clothing himself in his foundations according to the ritual order, has enwrapped himself in the ten fingers on the back of the sheep.

13. The ruddy bull keeps roaring at the cows; bellowing he goes to heaven and earth.
    His voice, like Indra's, is heard at the contest. He rushes, making this speech perceptible here.
14. Good to taste, swelling with milk, you go, setting in motion the honeyed plant.
    Purifying yourself, you go, producing thunder, while being poured around for Indra, o Soma.
15. Purify yourself thus, an exhilarating one for exhilaration, bowing with your weapons (those) of the water-grasper.
    Encompassing the glistening color, seeking cows, rush to us, when you are poured around, o Soma.

16. Having taken pleasure, o drop, (making) easy pathways easy to travel for us, purify yourself on a broad (path), making us wide spaces.
    Smashing asunder obstacles to progress as if with a deadly weapon, run along the back, on the sheep's back.
17. Stream rain to us—heavenly, hurrying, bringing refreshment, luck for the livestock, of lively drops.
    Run, pulling apart [=discriminating] these bonds here below, these webs, like straightened curls, o drop.
18. Untie like a knot the straight and the crooked way that are knotted up, when you are being purified, o Soma.
    Like a fallow bay steed you whinny on being let loose; run, o god, as a man in his prime in possession of a dwelling place.

19. Delightful, for the divine conclave for exhilaration, run around the back, on the sheep's back.
Possessing a thousand streams, sweet-smelling, not to be outwitted, flow around at the winning of prizes, at the victory over superior men.
20. Though without reins, without chariot, not yoked, having been let loose like steeds in a contest,
these gleaming soma-drinks run. O gods, drive right up to them, to drink them.
21. Thus, o drop, flow around the cloud, the flood in the cups, toward our pursuit of the gods.
Let Soma give to us desirable, lofty wealth, powerful and abounding in heroes.

22. When the speech from the mind of the seeker fashioned him [=Soma] on the foundation of the preeminent one [=Agni or Indra?] or face-to-face with the cattle,
thereupon the cows came to him at will, bellowing—to the delightful husband, the drop, in the tub.
23. The divine giver of drops, sweller of drops, (goes) forth. As truth, he purifies himself for truth, the very wise one.
Possessing the (royal) mandate, he has become the king of what belongs to the community. He has been brought forward to the earth by the ten reins.
24. Purifying himself with the filters, having his gaze on men, as the king of gods and mortals
he has become once again the wealth-lord of wealth; the drop bears the pleasing truth that is easy to bear.

25. Like a steed rushing to a win for the sake of fame, rush to the pursuit of Indra and Vāyu.
Give us a thousand lofty refreshments; become a finder of chattels while you are being purified, o Soma.
26. Pursuing the gods while being poured around, let the soma drinks run to a dwelling place rich in good heroes,
bringing favor here through sacrifice, possessing all desirable things, sacrificing at day(break) like Hotars, most gladdening.
27. Thus, o god Soma, purify yourself for the conclave of gods, for their great delight, as the gods' drink,
for we are greatly driven at the encounter. Make the two world-halves of good standing while you are being purified.

28. Like a horse you whinny on being yoked by the bulls, fearsome like a lion, swifter than mind.

Along paths turned hitherwards—those which are the straightest—bring benevolence here to us by purifying yourself, o drop.
29. A hundred god-generated streams have been sent surging; these thousand the poets groom.
O drop, by purifying yourself bring here from heaven a means of winning. You are the leader of great spoils.
30. Like surges from heaven, (like those) of days, his surges have surged. Like a king, the wise one does not violate his alliance.
Being put in your place according to our intentions, like a son according to the intentions of his father, bring freedom from overthrow here to this clan by purifying yourself.

31. Your honeyed streams have surged forth, when, purified, you go across the sheep's fleece.
Self-purifying one, purify yourself as the domain for the cows. On being born, you swelled the sun with rays [/chants].
32. Ever roaring along the path of truth, gleaming you radiate across the domain of the immortal one [=sun?].
Providing the means for exhilaration, you purify yourself for Indra, spurring on your own speech with the thoughts of the poets.
33. As heavenly eagle, o Soma, gaze down, swelling the streams with (ritual) action in the pursuit of the gods.
O drop, enter the tub for holding the soma. Roaring, come right up to the ray of the sun.

34. The draft-horse rouses forth the three voices, the hymnic vision of truth, the inspired thought of the sacred formulation.
The cows go asking for a cowherd; the thoughts go bellowing eagerly to Soma.
35. To Soma (go) the milk-cows bellowing eagerly; to Soma the inspired poets asking for him with their thoughts.
Soma, pressed, is purified while being anointed [/driven]; to Soma the chants, the triṣṭubh verses cry out together.
36. Thus, o Soma, being poured around, being purified, bring well-being here to us through your purification.
Enter Indra with a lofty shout; strengthen speech, beget plenitude.

37. In accordance with truth, the wakeful inspired poet of the thoughts, Soma, being purified, has sat down in the cups,
he whom they serve, eager in rivalry—the Adhvaryus of good hands, the charioteers (of the sacrifice).
38. He, being purified close by, like the Placer of the Sun has filled both world-halves, and he has disclosed them.
He with whose help the winners of dear things (win) dear things, he will extend spoils as if to a victor.

39. The strengthening strengthener, being purified, Soma the rewarder, helped us with his light,
with which our forefathers, knowing the track, finding the sun, burned the cows out of the rock.

40. As the sea he has roared at his first expansion, begetting the creatures as king of creation.
The bull in the filter, on the sheep's back, Soma has grown loftily, the drop being pressed.

41. Soma the buffalo performed this great (deed), that [/when] as embryo of the waters he chose the gods.
Purifying himself, he placed strength in Indra. The drop begat the light in the sun.

42. Exhilarate Vāyu for his quest and for our benefit; exhilarate Mitra and Varuṇa, while you are being purified.
Exhilarate the Marutian troop; exhilarate the gods; exhilarate Heaven and Earth, o god Soma.

43. Purify yourself, as the straight smiter of the crooked, thrusting away affliction and insults,
perfecting your milk with the milk of cows. You are (the comrade) of Indra; we are your comrades.

44. Purify yourself into the sweetness of honey, into a wellspring of goods; by purifying yourself bring here to us a hero and a portion.
Sweeten yourself for Indra as you purify yourself, o drop, and by purifying yourself bring here to us wealth from the sea.

45. Soma, pressed in a stream, driving like a steed, has streamed like a river to the deep, as prizewinner.
He has sat in the wooden womb while being purified. The drop has flowed together with the cows, with the waters.

46. This very Soma purifies himself for you, o Indra, in the cups, insightful and powerful for you who desire it—
the charioteer having the eye of the sun, whose impetuosity is real, who has been sent surging like the desire of those who seek the gods.

47. He, being purified with age-old vitality, hiding himself in the forms of the daughter (of the Sun [=Dawn]) [=milk],
in the waters clothing himself in shelter providing threefold defense, rasping like a Hotar he drives to the concourses.

48. Now, you, o god Soma, as charioteer—flow around for us in the two cups, while being purified,
sweetest in the waters, honeyed, truthful, you whose thoughts become reality, like god Savitar's.

49. Rush toward Vāyu in pursuit while being hymned, toward Mitra and Varuṇa while being purified,

toward the superior man who quickens insightful thought and bestrides the chariot, toward Indra the bull with the mace in his arms.

50. Rush toward your garments that garb well, toward the good-milking cows, while being purified,
toward glittering golden goods, to bring them to us, and toward chariot horses, o god Soma.

51. Rush toward heavenly goods for us, toward all earthly goods, while being purified,
toward that by which we shall win property, (that is,) toward a seer's (portion) for us like that of Jamadagni.

52. By purifying yourself with this purification bring goods here in this way. O drop, at (the time of) the hiding of the moon [=early morning] run forth into the lake.
The copper-colored (Sun/Fire), sped like the wind, is also there. The very wise one [=Soma?] also gives (to us) the superior man [=Indra?] to make the charge.

53. And with this purification purify yourself for us at the famous ford of the (prize/wealth) worthy of fame [=place of distribution of dakṣiṇās?].
The challengers' challenger [=Indra?] will shake off sixty thousand goods like ripe (fruit) from a tree, for our joy.

54. Of him—"Bull" his name—there are these two great forceful weapons of death either at the hiding of the moon or at the caressing [=mixing soma with milk]:
he put the challengers to sleep and "snowed" them. Turn back from here those without alliance (with us), back those without perception.

55. You converge on the three filters stretched out, but you run along just one while you are being purified.
You are Bhaga, you are the giver of the gift; you are bounteous to the bounteous ones, o drop.

56. This one, knowing all, possessing inspired thoughts, purifies himself—Soma, the king of all creation.
Rousing the droplets at the rites, the drop proceeds over and across the sheep's fleece all at once.

57. The undeceivable buffaloes lick the drop. On his track the poets squawk like birds of prey.
The insightful ones impel him with their ten fingers. They jointly anoint his form with the sap of the waters.

58. With you who purify yourself, o Soma, we would pull out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the match, time after time.
– This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant this to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

Anuṣṭubh Hymns: 98–101

IX.98 (810) Soma Pavamāna

Ambarīṣa Vārṣāgira and Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
12 verses: anuṣṭubh, except bṛhatī 11

The themes that dominate this hymn are standard soma tropes. The normal stages in the preparation of the soma are treated (see esp. vss. 2–3, 6–10), and the poet regularly reminds Soma of the gifts he should bring to his mortal preparers (see esp. vss. 1, 4–5, 12). Indeed the hymn begins and ends with an appeal for *vā́ja* "prizes" (vss. 1a, 12cd), in a sort of ring composition.

However, although the sentiments expressed and descriptions provided are unremarkable, the hymn is characterized by very choppy and sometimes incoherent syntax (which for purposes of translation has been cleaned up somewhat). Since there are also metrical disturbances in the hymn, one wonders if it has been transmitted entirely correctly.

1. O drop, stream to us the wealth coveted by many that best wins the prize,
   bringing a thousand presents, powerfully brilliant, vanquishing (even) the distinguished.
2. This one, being pressed, has engirded himself in the sheep's fleece, as a man on a chariot does in armor.
   The drop, impelled by the wooden (paddle), has flowed in streams while being impelled.
3. This drop, being pressed, has flowed around in the sheep's fleece, aroused to exhilaration,
   the one who, erect at the ceremony, goes seeking cows with his stream, like (Agni) with his flame.
4. Because you, o god, are goods for each and every pious mortal,
   o drop, you seek to win wealth in thousands, which has a hundred embodiments.
5. May we be (most nearest) to these goods of yours, coveted by many, o good one, Vṛtra-smasher,
   most nearest to your refreshment and favor, o you who are not poor.
6. The self-glorious one, smashed by stones, whom the twice five sisters bathe—the one dear and desirable to Indra, full of waves,
7. This delightful tawny brown one they purify all around with the fleece,
   him who circles around all the gods together with his exhilarating drink.
8. For with his help (the gods) are drinking (the exhilarating drink) that brings skill to realization,

   the delightful one who has placed lofty fame among your [=poets'] patrons, like the sun (in heaven).
9. The drop has been born of you two at the sacrifices—o you two world-halves [=jaws of soma press?], goddesses who (yet) belong to mankind—
   the mountain-abiding god. Unfailingly, very noisily (I praise?) him.
10. O Soma, you are poured around for Indra, the Vṛtra-smiter, to drink,
    and for the superior man who gives priestly gifts, and for the god sitting on the seat.
11. The age-old soma drinks have flowed into the filter at the break of dawn,
    snorting away into the distance those who know the crooked ways and those without discernment, early in the morning.
12. O comrades, might we and you, our patrons, attain him who shines in front, whose prizes are to be secured. Might we gain him who offers a house full of prizes.

IX.99 (811) Soma Pavamāna

Two sons of Rebha, the Kāśyapas
8 verses: anuṣṭubh, except bṛhatī 1

The varieties of thought and its poetic expressions are the focus of this hymn, especially in its earlier verses (1–2, 4–5), and Soma's mental and verbal powers complement those of his mortal worshipers (vs. 6). The physical preparation of soma is not neglected, however (esp. vss. 3, 7–8).

1. For the delightful daring one they draw the bow, the manly power.
   Those seeking the great one weave a glowing garment for their lord at the forefront of the inspired words.
2. And prepared by night, he plunges toward the prizes,
   when the insightful thoughts of Vivasvant impel him, the tawny one, to drive.
3. We groom this one of his [=Vivasvant?], the one who is exhilaration, Indra's best drink,
   whom the cows have previously sucked with their mouths and now the patrons do.
4. They have cried out to him with an ancient song, while he is being purified.
   And the insightful thoughts yearn for him, those bearing the names of the gods.
5. They purify him on the sheep's fleece, while the steadfast one grows strong.
   Those of inspired thought hope for him to be like a messenger, (for them) to be first in his thought.

6. Becoming purified, the most exhilarating Soma sits in the cups,
depositing his seed (in them) as if in livestock. The lord of insight
displays his eloquence.
7. He is groomed by those who work well [=fingers], the god pressed for
the gods.
As his complete attachment to them [=waters] is known, he plunges
through the great waters.
8. O drop, pressed and held by men, you are led through into the filter.
As the one most exhilarating for Indra, you sit down here in the cups.

IX.100 (812) Soma Pavamāna

Two sons of Rebha, the Kāśyapas
9 verses: anuṣṭubh

As Oldenberg suggests (1888: 128–29), in order to conform to the principles of arrangement, this hymn must have originally consisted of two separate hymns, of five and four verses respectively. This division, made solely on numerical grounds, is confirmed by the structure of the hymn, for the final four verses repeat or ring changes on the first five. Verse 6, the first of the original second hymn, is structurally, and in part verbally, identical to the final verse of the original first hymn (5), but also incorporates, in variant form, verse 4d. Verse 7 repeats much of verse 1 in different order. Verse 8 deviates more from its model, verse 2, but reproduces verse 2d verbatim as verse 8d. Verse 9 is the most distant from its model, verse 3, but contains the "heaven and earth" found in the "earthly and heavenly goods" of 3cd. Once again we see the ways in which the Ṛgvedic poet uses formulaic language and poetic templates for his own purposes.

1. Those without deceit cry out to him, dear and desirable to Indra.
The mothers lick him like a calf in its first stage of life, just born.
2. While being purified, o Soma drop, bring here doubly lofty wealth.
You foster all goods in the house of the pious man.
3. Set loose the insightful thought yoked with mind, as thunder
does rain.
You foster earthly and heavenly goods, o Soma.
4. Your stream, when you are pressed, runs in a circle like (the horse) of a
victor,
speeding through the sheep's fleece like a winner bringing prizes.
5. For our will and skill, o poet, purify yourself in a stream, Soma,
pressed for Indra to drink, for Mitra and Varuṇa.

6. Purify yourself as best winner of prizes in the filter, pressed in a stream,
most honeyed for Indra and Viṣṇu, for the gods, Soma.

7. The mothers, those without deceit, lick you, the tawny one, in the filter,
as milk-cows do a new-born calf, o self-purifying one, at your expansion.
8. O self-purifying one, you drive to great fame with your brilliant rays.
Vaunting yourself, you keep smashing away all the dark shades in the
house of the pious man.
9. O you of great commandment, you have carried yourself beyond heaven
and earth.
You have fastened on your mantle in your greatness, self-purifying one.

IX.101 (813) Soma Pavamāna

Andhīgu Śyāvāśvi (1–3), Yayāti Nāhuṣa (4–6), Nahuṣa Mānava (7–9), Manu Sāṃvaraṇa (10–12), Prajāpati (13–16)
16 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 2–3, arranged in tṛcas

In order to conform to the pattern of arrangement, this last hymn in the anuṣṭubh group must actually have consisted originally of five three-verse hymns, with a single verse (16) appended, as was already pointed out by Oldenberg (1888: 201). There is, however, some interconnection among the tṛcas that points to a sense of cohesion. In particular, the first and last tṛcas (vss. 1–3 and 13–15) are linked by the striking image in their first verses (1, 13) of a sacrifice-defiling dog drawn to the sound of the soma being pressed, a dog that must be driven away. Verse 13 also contains a brief and enigmatic allusion to a myth also enigmatically mentioned to in X.171.2.

Most of the rest of the hymn contains standard material: the details of preparation of the drink and its journey across the filter to mix with the milk, as well as its relationship to the gods, especially Indra. There is some internal unity visible in the individual tṛcas, but it is not pronounced.

1. With your advance victory over the stalk, for the pressed soma to cause
exhilaration,
pierce away the dog that has the long tongue, o comrades.
2. What flows forth and around in a pure stream, the pressed
drop, like a horse that gets results,
3. That one, the soma, poor at burning [?], do the superior men, with their
insight aimed toward all,
impel to the sacrifice with stones.

4. The most honeyed pressed soma drinks, exhilarating to Indra,
provided with filters, have flowed. Let your exhilarating drinks go to
the gods.
5. "The drop purifies himself for Indra," so the gods said.
The lord of speech does battle [/seeks bounties], holding sway over all
with his strength.

6. Possessing a thousand streams he purifies himself, a sea setting speech aswing,
Soma, lord of riches, comrade of Indra, day after day.

7. This one here is Pūṣan, Wealth, Fortune; Soma rushes as he is being purified.
As lord of all creation, he has surveyed both world-halves.

8. Together the dear ones have cried out to him, the cows avid for exhilaration.
The soma drinks make their own paths, the self-purifying drops.

9. The one who is strongest [=Indra], bring him here, o self-purifying one, the one worthy of fame,
who sur(mounts) the five domains, with whom we shall gain wealth.

10. The soma drops purify themselves, as best pathfinders for us,
allies, unblemished, rich in purpose, finding the sun, when they are being pressed.

11. Having been pressed by the stones, conspicuous on the hide of the cow,
the finders of goods have roared together from all around toward refreshment for us.

12. These purified soma juices, attentive to poetic inspiration, mixed with curds,
are worthy to be seen like suns, mobile yet fixed in the ghee.

13. Like a mortal he [=the dog] has shown preference for the speech of the stalk being pressed.
Smite away the dog, the ungenerous one, as the Bhṛgus (did) the Battler.

14. Their kinsman has wrapped himself in a cloak (of milk) to enjoy it, like a son in the two arms (of his mother).
He runs like a swain to a maiden, like a wooer, to sit in the womb.

15. He is a hero, bringing skill to realization, who has propped apart the two world-halves.
The tawny one has wrapped himself in the filter, like a ritual adept, to sit in the womb.

16. Soma purifies himself with the fleeces of sheep, on the cow's hide.
Ever roaring, the bullish fallow bay goes to his rendezvous with Indra.

Uṣṇih Hymns: 102–106

IX.102 (814) Soma Pavamāna

Trita Āptya
8 verses: uṣṇih

The many obscurities in this hymn exist in tension with the clarity of its larger structure: it is a ring composition, with a pāda-length phrase in the first and last verses (1b, 8c) defining the ring: "spurring on the visionary power of truth." This phrase also sets one of the underlying themes, that Soma during his preparation inspires and creates poetic truth. There is clarity also in the general progression of the hymn, which follows Soma's journey from the press (vs. 2) and across the filter (vs. 3) to his final preparation (vs. 7). Another theme that runs throughout is that of Soma as a child in relation to his mothers (vss. 1, 4, 7; see also 6), who not only gave him physical birth but also formed him in his ritual rule (see vs. 4).

It must be admitted, however, that much remains puzzling in the hymn. There are a number of problems of syntax and lexicon. The two adjacent appearances of Trita (or "the third one," vss. 2–3) are also unclear, though they clearly play on the numerals two and three found in those verses. The hymn is ascribed by the Anukramaṇī to Trita Āptya, and so it might be that the poet is simply inserting himself in the poem. But, since Trita Āptya is actually a mythological figure, it is more likely that the Anukramaṇī has assigned the hymn to that figure on the basis of the occurrences of *tritá* in those two verses.

1. Through his action the child of the great (rivers), spurring on the visionary power of truth,
encompasses all dear things—now once again.

2. In the two "jaws" [?] [=soma press?] of Trita [/the third one], when he [=Soma] took to the hidden track,
(he traveled) through the seven domains of the sacrifice—now, right to his own dear (place).

3. (Across) the three (filters), on the backs of Trita ("the third one"), in a stream—rouse wealth!—
he measures out the stages of his journey—the very resolute one.

4. The seven mothers [=rivers?] instructed him as a ritual adept, when he was born for splendor.
This one is the enduring (treasure) of treasures, since he paid attention (to his mothers).

5. Under his commandment are all the gods of one accord and without deceit.
Eagerly sought are your joys, since they [=gods] take pleasure (in them).

6. The embryo that those strong through truth have begotten as lovely to see,
the poet, most liberal at the ceremony, sought by many—

7. Toward (him) the two youthfully exuberant mothers of truth [=world-halves? Night and Dawn?] go, conjoined but each in her own person—
when stretching the sacrifice in due order, they [=priests] anoint (him).

8. Through your resolve, with gleaming eyes, you unclosed the pen of heaven,
spurring the visionary power of truth forth in the ceremony.

IX.103 (815) Soma Pavamāna

Dvita Āptya
6 verses: uṣṇih

The most salient stylistic feature of the hymn is the preverb that begins each verse—*pári* "around" in all but the first verse—with the preverb increasingly less integrated syntactically with the rest of the verse. The focus on *pári* arises from the description of the motion of the soma as it is poured in circles into the filter.

Like the last hymn, this one follows the journey of Soma and also focuses on his ritual role and his participation in reciprocal ritual speech. Not only do we find the technical term *vedhás* "ritual adept' (vs. 1), as in IX.102.4 and 101.15, but also the likewise technical *vāghát* "cantor" (vs. 5) in its only appearance in the IXth Maṇḍala. The poet's presentation of his speech and poetic thoughts in verse 1 and the voices of the seers in verse 3 are met by Soma as himself "leader of thoughts" in verse 4.

The hymn shares some lexical and thematic material with the immediately preceding IX.102. In addition to the aforementioned *vedhás*, note, for example, the cleverly variant pādas 102.5b and 103.4b, which both contain "all the gods" and lack of deceit. But in 103 all the gods are embedded in a compound modifying Soma, whereas in 102 they are syntactically independent; moreover, the "deceit" theme is carried by two different roots (*dabh, druh*) in two different valences: the gods of 102 do not deceive, while Soma in 103 cannot be deceived. It is difficult not to consider 102 and 103 as composed in conversation with each other, and the Anukramaṇī's ascription of 103 to *Dvita* Āptya ("the second Āptya") clearly plays off 102's *Trita* Āptya ("the third Āptya"—but also the original Āptya from a mythological perspective, since he is a commonly mentioned figure and has an Avestan correspondent, whereas Dvita Āptya is essentially found only here).

1. Forth to the ritual adept, to Soma as he is being purified, shall I bear the upraised speech
   like a present, along with my thoughts. He will find enjoyment.
2. Around the sheep's fleeces he rushes, being anointed with cows.
   Being purified, the tawny one creates three seats for himself.
3. Around the cask dripping with honey he rushes on the sheep's fleece.
   The seven voices of the seers have cried out to him.
4. Around (he rushes)—the leader of thoughts, belonging to all the gods, undeceivable.
   Soma the tawny, being purified, entered the two cups.
5. Around—following your divine independent powers, drive in the same chariot with Indra,
   being purified as an immortal cantor by cantors.
6. Around—like a prize-seeking team, the god pressed for the gods,
   reaching through (it), the self-purifying one runs through (the filter).

IX.104 (816) Soma Pavamāna

Parvata Kāṇva and Nārada Kāṇva, or the two Apsarases named Śikhaṇḍinī, daughters of Kaśyapa
6 verses: uṣṇih

This hymn forms a close pair with 105 and the two are a textbook demonstration of how Ṛgvedic poets generate variations on underlyingly identical lexical and thematic material. The two hymns correspond verse by verse, and even in translation the identity of many of the words, their grammatical forms, and whole phrases is clear. But the poets avoid pāda-length repetitions and introduce variation via lexical replacement or grammatical transformation.

The contents are unremarkable; both hymns deploy the usual soma-hymn tropes, though the final apotropaic verse is refreshingly vivid.

1. Comrades, sit down here; sing forth to him as he is being purified.
   With sacrifices attend on him like a child for splendor.
2. Send him like a calf to join with his mothers—him who brings success to the household,
   who pursues the gods, the exhilarating drink with double strength.
3. Purify him who brings success to skill, for him to pursue the troop (of Maruts),
   to be most wealful for Mitra and Varuṇa.
4. The voices have cried out to you, the finder of goods for us.
   With cows we will clothe your color.
5. O drop, lord of exhilarating drinks—you are the one affording delight to the gods—
   like a comrade for a comrade, become the best finder of the way for us.
6. Put away from us bag and baggage any demonic devourer whatsoever.
   Keep away from us the godless double-dealing one, away difficult straits.

IX.105 (817) Soma Pavamāna

Parvata and Narada
6 verses: uṣṇih

For discussion of this twin to IX.104, see the introduction to that hymn.

1. Comrades, sing to him while he is being purified for your exhilaration.
   Like a child they sweeten him with sacrifices, with greetings.
2. Like a calf, being impelled to join with his mothers, he is driven [/anointed],
   pursuing the gods, the exhilarating drink adorned all around with thoughts.

3. Here is the one bringing success to skill; here is the one to pursue the troop.
   Here is the pressed drink, most honeyed for the gods.
4. When pressed, o well-skilled drop, run for us (with goods) in cows and horses.
   I have fixed your gleaming color among the cows.
5. O drop, lord of the fallow bays, as the one who best affords delight to the gods,
   like a manly comrade for a comrade, be there for our illumination.
6. (Put) away from us bag and baggage any ungodly devourer whatsoever.
   Having prevailed, o drop, (parry) oppressions, (keep) away the double-dealing one.

IX.106 (818) Soma Pavamāna

Agni Cākṣuṣa (1–3), Cakṣus Mānava (4–6), Manu Āpsava (7–9), Agni Cākṣuṣa (10–14)
14 verses: uṣṇih

This last hymn in the uṣṇih collection, as is common with hymns positioned at the end of their metrical grouping, is too long and needs to be broken down into smaller units: four tṛcas (vss. 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12) followed by a two-verse hymn (13–14). In this case the division is in general accord with the Anukramaṇī, which ascribes the hymn to three different mythical poets, marked by their patronymic relationships as grandson, son, and father, each with a tṛca. The grandson returns as poet of the last five verses, that is, of the final tṛca (10–12) and the two-verse unit that ends the hymn.

The contents of the hymn are entirely conventional, with a focus on Indra as drinker of the soma, especially in the first part of the hymn. Note that "finding the sun" is also a preoccupation, and that word (*svarvíd*) appears once in each of the first three tṛcas (vss. 1, 4, 9).

1. Let these pressed (soma drinks) go to Indra, the tawny ones to the bull, the drops born because of (Indra's?) attentive hearing, finding the sun.
2. This one here, bringing gain for the taking, purifies himself for Indra when pressed.
   Soma takes note of the victorious one, as is (well) known.
3. Indra, in the raptures of just this (soma), grabbed a handful bringing gain,
   and he carried the bullish mace—he who is entirely victorious in the waters.
4. Run forth as the wakeful one, o Soma; flow around for Indra, o drop.
   Bring here brilliant tempestuous force that finds the sun.

5. For Indra purify yourself into bullish exhilaration, as the one visible to all,
   possessing a thousand courses, path-making, wide-gazing.
6. The best finder of the way for us, most honeyed for the gods,
   drive along your thousand paths, ever roaring.
7. Purify yourself in streams, o drop, to pursue the gods with strength.
   Honeyed, sit in our tub, o Soma.
8. Your droplets, swimming in water, have strengthened Indra for exhilaration.
   The gods have drunk you for immortality
9. O you pressed drops, run wealth to us here while being purified,
   bringing the heavens to rain and the waters to streaming, finding the sun.
10. Soma, being purified in a wave, runs across the fleece of the sheep,
    at the forefront of speech, self-purifying, ever roaring.
11. With insights they impel the prizewinner, playing in the wood, across the sheep [=fleece].
    The thoughts sound together toward the three-backed one.
12. He has been sent surging toward the tubs, like a prize-seeking team at a competition.
    Being purified, begetting speech, he has flowed.
13. The delightful fallow bay purifies himself, across the tufts, at speed,
    streaming glory consisting of heroes to the praisers.
14. In this way purify yourself, seeking the gods. The streams of honey have been sent surging.
    Rasping, circle around the filter on all sides.

Hymns Arranged in Pragāthas: 107–108

IX.107 (819) Soma Pavamāna

Seven Seers
26 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas, except dvipadā virāj bhurij 3 and dvipadā virāj 16 as supplemental verses to the preceding pragātha

This long hymn mostly stays focused the usual themes of the IXth Maṇḍala: the pressing of Soma, his journey across the filter, his entry into the waters, his mixing with cows' milk, and his arrival at his destination, the wooden cups. Interspersed

are references to Soma's cosmic aspect (e.g., the heavenly udder in vs. 5) and cosmic deeds (e.g., making the sun mount in heaven, vs. 7). Especially prominent in the middle and late parts of the hymn are mentions of the sea (vss. 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 23), referring both to the waters that the soma enters and to the expanse of soma itself.

Toward the end the hymn takes a slightly personal turn, in the pragātha of verses 19–20, where the poet celebrates his fellowship with Soma and, by implication, the mental state he achieves from drinking the soma. In particular, 20cd "We have flown like birds far past the sun..." recalls several famous 1st-person descriptions of soma's effects: VIII.48.3 "We have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods" and X.119, the Laba-sūkta, in which the soma-drinker flies through the cosmos, describing his bird's eye view of heaven and earth.

1. From here sprinkle around the pressed drink, which is the soma, the highest oblation.
   The manly one who has run within the waters, the soma did he [=the priest] press with stones.
2. Now, while being purified by the sheep, flow around as one who is undeceivable, very sweet-smelling.
   Even when (you) have just been pressed in the waters, we become exhilarated by your stalk, while preparing you with cows as the higher (oblation),
3. Being pressed all around to be seen—the exhilarator of the gods, the wide-gazing drop that is resolve.

4. O Soma, you rush while being purified in a stream and clothing yourself in the waters.
   Conferring treasure, you sit here upon the womb of truth as the golden wellspring, o god.
5. Milking the heavenly udder of his own dear honey, he has taken his ancient seat.
   The prizewinner rushes to the support worthy of the asking, the wide-gazing one rinsed by men.

6. O Soma, while being purified all around in the sheep's fleece, wakeful and dear,
   you became an inspired poet, the best of the Aṅgirases. Equip our sacrifice with honey.
7. Soma the rewarder purifies himself, the best pathfinder, the inspired, wide-gazing seer.
   You became the sage poet who best pursues the gods. You made the sun mount in heaven.

8. Soma, being pressed by the pressers upon the backs of the sheep,

   drives with his stream as if with a golden horse, drives with his delighting stream.
9. Provided with cows he has flowed together with the cows at the water's edge; Soma has flowed together with those that have been milked.
   They have gone into the enclosures as if into the sea. The invigorating one wells out for exhilaration.

10. O Soma, while you are being pressed by the stones, (you come) here across the sheep's fleeces.
    Like a man into a fortress, the tawny one enters into the two cups. You have established your seat in the woods [/in the wooden cups].
11. He has become groomed across the fine (hairs) of the ewe, like a prize-seeking team at a competition.
    Self-purifying Soma is to be cheered on by those of inspired thought, by the inspired reciters of verses.

12. O Soma, like a river that has swollen with its flood, you have swollen forth with the milk of the plant to pursue the gods,
    wakeful like an exhilarating drink, toward the cask dripping with honey.
13. The delightful one has clothed himself in a silvery cloak, to be caressed like a dear son.
    The laborers propel him, in their two hands, as they would a chariot, into the rivers.

14. The soma juices, the Āyus, purify themselves into an exhilarating drink of exhilaration—
    they of inspired thought, bringing exhilaration and finding the sun, (purify themselves) upon the surface of the sea.
15. Purifying himself, he crosses the sea with his wave as king and god—and lofty truth—
    rushing according to the ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa, being propelled—the lofty truth,
16. Being guided by men, the delightful, wide-gazing king and god belonging to the sea.

17. Soma purifies himself as the exhilarating drink, pressed for Indra along with the Maruts.
    Possessed of a thousand streams he rushes beyond the sheep's fleece. The Āyus groom him.
18. Being purified in the cup, a poet begetting thought, Soma rejoices among the gods.
    Clothing himself in waters, he has wrapped himself with cows as the higher (oblation), sitting in the woods [/wooden cups].

19. O Soma, I rejoice in your fellowship (with me) every day, o drop.
Many things, o brown one, get me down—way down. Go past these barriers.
20. Both by night and by day, Soma, I am at your udder for fellowship with you, o brown one.
We have flown like birds far past the sun that scorches with its heat.

21. While being groomed, dexterous one, you impel your speech upon the sea.
O self-purifying one, you rush toward ample, much-craved, golden wealth.
22. Being groomed, purifying yourself on the sheep's fleece, as bull you have roared down into the wood(en cup).
O self-purifying Soma, you rush to the rendezvous with the gods, being anointed with cows.

23. Purify yourself to win the prize, (aiming) toward all products of poetic skill.
Soma, you, the exhilarating one, were [/are] the first to spread out the sea for the gods.
24. Purify yourself all around the earthly realm and the heavenly ones, o Soma, in accordance with your ordinances.
O wide-gazing one, the inspired poets propel you, resplendent, with their thoughts and insights.

25. Purifying themselves, they have been set loose across the filter in a steam—
the exhilarating coursers, fit for Indra along with the Maruts, toward wisdom [/the ritual meal] and pleasing offerings.
26. Clothing himself in the waters, he rushes around the cask, the drop being propelled by the pressers.
Begetting the light, he has made the delighting cows bellow, making the cows as if into his fresh garment.

IX.108 (820) Soma Pavamāna

Gaurivīti Śāktya 1–2, Śakti Vāsiṣṭha 3, 14–16, Ūru Āṅgirasa 4–5, Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja 6–7, Ūrdhvasadman Āṅgirasa 8–9, Kṛtayaśas Āṅgirasa 10–11, Ṛṇaṃcaya 12–13
16 verses: kakubh alternating with satobṛhatī, except gāyatrī yavamadhyā 13, arranged in pragāthas

The Anukramaṇī names seven different poets as authors of this hymn; the Anukramaṇī's divisions do not correspond at all to the clear pragātha structure, however, and therefore seem questionable. Within the pragāthas there is, more often than not, syntactic dependency between verses (e.g., vss. 3–4, 7–8, 13–14), as well as some thematic continuity. Stylistically the hymn, especially toward the beginning, is characterized by rather choppy syntax and often presents itself as a mosaic of semi-self-contained phrases. On the other hand, there are signs of ring composition: the first phrase of the hymn, "purify yourself as the most honeyed for Indra, o Soma" recurs as the framing words of the first verse of the final pragātha (vs. 15), and the relative clause about the drinking of soma that introduces verse 2 is echoed, with the same relative pronoun, in 14a.

Allusions to the Vala myth are found in the interior of the hymn (vss. 4, 6). The heavenly soma, conceived of in part as rain, is also a prominent theme (vss. 9–11, and also probably vss. 4 [the "dear immortal one"] and 6 [the "watery" cows]). This cosmic soma is, as usual, a counterpoint to the ritual soma, the standard details of whose preparation are found throughout.

1. Purify yourself as the most honeyed for Indra, o Soma, as the exhilarating drink that best finds resolve,
greatly, as the exhilarating drink that best rules heaven,
2. Since, having drunk of you, the bull acts as a bull, at the drinking of this sun-finding (soma).
Bearing good marks he [=Soma] strode toward the refreshments, like Etaśa toward the prize.

3. O self-purifying one, it was certainly you as the most brilliant who made the heavenly races heed
for the sake of immortality,
4. With whom Navagva, with whom Dadhyañc uncloses (the cowpen), by whom the inspired poets have acquired for themselves
(some) of the dear immortal one [=heavenly soma] in the grace of the gods, by whom they have each attained fame.

5. This most exhilarating one here, pressed in a stream, purifies himself with the fleeces of sheep,
playing like a wave of the waters,
6. He who with his might cut the ruddy, watery cows out from within the rock.
You have extended your control over the enclosure of the cows and horses. Like a man in armor, break into it, o bold one.

7. Press it, sprinkle it around, as one sprinkles a horse—(the soma that is stoma, i.e.,) the praise song that crosses the waters, crosses the airy realms,
that is howling in the wood and swimming in the waters,
8. The bull of a thousand streams, growing strong through the milk, dear to the divine race,
who born of truth through truth has grown strong as king, god, and lofty truth.

9. Illuminate lofty splendor and glory, o lord of refreshment, as you seek the gods, o god.
   Unleash the middle bucket [=rain cloud].
10. Coil yourself into the two cups when you are pressed, skillful one, as the clanlord of the clans, like a draft-horse.
    Purify yourself into the rain from heaven, the streaming of waters. Quicken our insights for the quest for cattle.

11. They have milked out of the heavens this thousand-streamed bull, who arouses exhilaration,
    who brings all good things.
12. The bull has been born, the immortal that gives birth, burning away the darkness with his light.
    Well-praised by the poets, he dons his raiment, a threefold one, by his wondrous ability.

13. He is pressed—who is the leader of goods, of riches, of Iḍā-offerings, Soma, who (is the leader) of good settlements,
14. Our (soma) of which Indra will drink, of which the Maruts, or Bhaga along with Aryaman,
    by whom we will bring Mitra and Varuṇa here and Indra here for great help.

15. For Indra to drink, o Soma—held by men, having good weapons and most exhilarating,
    purify yourself as the most honeyed.
16. Enter into the heart of Indra, the repository of soma, like rivers into the sea,
    being pleasing to Mitra, to Varuṇa, to Vāyu, the highest prop of heaven.

Hymns in Assorted Meters: 109–114

IX.109 (821) Soma Pavamāna

Dhiṣṇya Fires, descendants of Īśvara
22 verses: dvipadā virāj, arranged in tṛcas

The Anukramaṇī's fanciful ascription of this hymn to the dhiṣṇya ("holy") fires finds no echo in the composition itself.

The lightness and brevity of this meter (each verse containing four pādas of a mere five syllables each) do not lend themselves to complex phraseology or elaborate images. Instead the hymn consists primarily of standard apostrophes to Soma (e.g., the imperative "purify yourself" occurs five times in the hymn: vss. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10) and simple present-tense descriptions of the process of preparation (e.g., vs. 11 "they purify"; vs. 12 "they groom").

For links with the next hymn, see the introduction to IX.110.

1. Run forth and around for Indra, o Soma, sweet for Mitra, Pūṣan, and Bhaga.
2. Indra should drink of you, Soma, when you are pressed, for will and skill—and (so should) all the gods.
3. Thus, for immortality and for great peaceful dwelling, rush gleaming as the heavenly beestings.

4. Purify yourself, Soma, as the great sea and as the father of the gods, (going) to all domains.
5. Gleaming, purify yourself for the gods, o Soma, for heaven, for earth, and as weal for offspring.
6. You are the supporter of heaven, the gleaming beestings. In your real expansion, as prizewinner purify yourself.

7. Purify yourself, o Soma, possessing heavenly brilliance and good streams, along the (fleece) of the sheep as the great ancient one.
8. Being guided by men after being born purified, he streams all (goods) [/to all (domains)]—the gladdening one who finds the sun.
9. The drop being purified, being chosen, will make offspring and all goods for us.

10. Purify yourself, Soma, for will and skill, washed down like a prizewinning horse for the stake.
11. The pressers purify that sap of yours for exhilaration, the soma for great heavenly brilliance.
12. They groom the tawny child just born, the soma in the filter, the drop for the gods.

13. The dear drop has been purified for exhilaration in the lap of the waters, the sage poet (has been purified) for good fortune.
14. He bears the name dear to Indra, with which he smashes all obstacles.
15. All the gods drink of him, prepared with cows, pressed by men.

16. Being pressed, he has streamed forth in a thousand streams, across the filter, through the sheep's fleece.
17. The prizewinner has streamed in a thousand spurts, being groomed with waters, being prepared with cows.
18. O Soma, journey forth to the cheeks of Indra, being guided by men, pressed by stones.

19. The prizewinner has been let loose across the filter, Soma of a thousand streams, for Indra.
20. With the sap of honey they anoint him, the drop for Indra the bull, for exhilaration.
21. They groom you, the tawny one clothed in waters, for the gods, for (you to attain) your full dimension at will.
22. The drop spills, spills down for Indra—the mighty one preparing and setting the waters to flow.

IX.110 (822) Soma Pavamāna

Tryaruṇa and Trasadasyu
12 verses: pipīlikamadhyā 1–3, ūrdhvabṛhatī 4–9, virāj 10–12, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn is made up of verses in three rare meters; in fact verses 4–9 are the only ones in all of the Ṛgveda in this meter (consisting of verses of three pādas of twelve syllables each), and the first three verses are the only pipīlikamadhyā stanzas in the Ṛgveda with this syllable count (12 8 12). (The meter's name means "ant-middled," because a short pāda is sandwiched between two longer ones.) Despite the heterogeneity of the meters, there is evidence that the hymn is a conceptual unity, particularly in the signs of ring composition: the last two verses (11–12) echo the first two. "The one who gains the prize" (11c) matches "to gain the prize" in 1a; the two forms of the root *sah* "vanquish" in verse 12 (a and c) recall the "vanquisher" in 1b; the "difficult plunges" in 12b are the negative counterpart of Soma's plunge in 2c. Internally we may note that the begetting of the sun in verse 3, at the end of the first tṛca (3a, with its initial verb *ájījanaḥ*) is immediately reprised in 4a, in a new meter, again with the fronted verb *ájījanaḥ*.

The hymn also echoes some of the vocabulary and phraseology of the preceding hymn, X.109, whose metrical simplicity is in marked contrast to this hymn. Both hymns begin almost identically, though adjusted by the addition of particles for the metrical difference: IX.109.1a *pári prá dhanva* and 110.1a *páry ū ṣú prá dhanva*..., both meaning "run forth and around." The rare word *pīyū́ṣa* "beestings, first-milk," which makes two appearances in 109 (vss. 3, 6), recurs in 110.8, qualified as "the beestings of heaven" (*diváḥ pīyū́ṣam*) like the "heavenly beestings" of 109.3 (*divyáḥ pīyū́ṣaḥ*).

In content the first three and the last three (10–12) verses are fairly straightforward, and, especially the last three verses, are concerned with the earthly soma of the ritual, though also celebrating his great powers in confronting enemies and obstacles. A hint of the cosmic soma comes in verse 3, in the aforementioned begetting of the sun, though in this verse this action is linked with Soma's ritual progress. The middle six verses (4–9), in an otherwise unattested meter, are more difficult and treat the interaction and blurred boundaries between earthly, ritual soma and cosmic soma. The gods' yearning for soma (see esp. vs. 6) and the primal preparation of soma (see esp. vss. 7–8) are described, and the final verse of this group (vs. 9) declares Soma's universal power.

1. Run forth and around to gain the prize, around as the vanquisher of obstacles.
   As the requiter of our debts, you speed [/are implored] to overcome hatreds.
2. Because we cheer you on, Soma, when you are pressed for the great (prize), in your kingship in the clash,
   you plunge forward toward the prizes, o self-purifying one.
3. For you have begotten the sun, o self-purifying one, in spreading your milk by your skill,
   hastening along with Plenitude, who is lively with cows.
4. You have begotten it, o immortal one, here among mortals, upon the foundation of the truth, of the dear immortal one [=heavenly soma].
   You have always flowed, ever streaming toward the prize.
5. Because with your fame you drilled ever closer to the inexhaustible drink for men, as if to some kind of wellspring,
   while being carried in the (priest's) hands, like (booty by someone) with arrows in his hands—
6. Because of that, seeing for themselves a friendship with him who is radiant with goods [=Soma], some heavenly beings roared to him.
   He uncovers the fleece as the god Savitar uncovers a desirable thing.
7. In you, Soma, those who first twisted the ritual grass placed their insight for the great prize of victory and for fame.
   Impel our (insight), o hero, for heroic power.
8. The ancient beestings of heaven, worthy of hymns—they milked that out of the great depth of heaven.
   They cried out in unison toward Indra as he was being born.
9. Now, o self-purifying one, in that (you) sur(mount) these two worlds here and all these creatures by your greatness,
   outstanding like a bull in the herd you extend yourself over them.
10. Self-purifying Soma, being purified in the sheep's fleece, has streamed, playing like a child—
    the drop possessing a thousand streams and a hundred prizes.
11. This one being purified, the honeyed and truth-possessing drop, the sweet wave, purifies himself for Indra—
    the one who gains the prize, finds wide space, and confers vitality.
12. Purify yourself, vanquishing the battlers, repelling demons and difficult plunges,
    having good weapons, having vanquished your rivals, Soma.

IX.111 (923) Soma Pavamāna

Anānata Pārucchepi
3 verses: atyaṣṭi

This hymn is the only one in the IXth Maṇḍala in the intricate atyaṣṭi meter, with its variable lines and patterned repetition. The poet, according to the Anukramaṇī, is Anānata son of Parucchepa, a poet not otherwise represented in the Ṛgveda. However, his putative father, Parucchepa, is the author, again according to the Anukramaṇī, of I.127–39, the only sustained corpus of atyaṣṭi in the Ṛgveda.

The hymn begins with a description of Soma's journey, and the final verse (vs. 3) returns to this theme. The middle verse (vs. 2) is a brief, and quite enigmatic, treatment of the Vala myth. In our view it involves something of a reversal of some standard tropes. The 2nd-person subject of the first three pādas of the verse is Soma, who is here credited with retrieving the cows stolen by the Paṇis. These cows, of course, also represent the milk with which the soma will be mixed. Soma then grooms or cleans these cows along with his (or their?) mothers. Now ordinarily it is Soma who is groomed; he doesn't perform any grooming on others. And a number of translators and commentators have attempted to make the verb used here (*marjayasi*) reflect this normal usage. However, this particular verb form is emphatically and unambiguously transitive, and it seems likely that the poet is thus drawing our attention to the role reversal, with the usual female agents of Soma's grooming relegated to auxiliaries.

The reference of the next item, the melody or sāman, is equally obscure. If it is part of the Vala myth, it may refer to the song sung by Indra/Bṛhaspati and the Aṅgirases to open the cave and free the cows; they came "from afar" bringing their song, and to the cows within the cave the song would have sounded "from afar." It is also possible that the simile just refers to a general situation, the pleasure one gets from hearing a snatch of song out of nowhere. In any case in the last portion of this verse Soma acquires vigor or vitality from the cows, who are also identified as the three forms of ritual speech.

1. Being purified with this golden light, he crosses all hatreds with (horses)
   of his own yoking—like the Sun with the (horses) of his own yoking.
   In the stream of pressed (juice) he shines ruddy and tawny as he is being
   purified,
   when he makes the circuit of all his forms by (the impetus of) the
   versifiers—by (the impetus of) the versifiers with their seven mouths.
2. You found that good thing of the Paṇis [=herd of cows]. You groom (it),
   along with your mothers, in your own house—in your house through
   the insights of truth.
   Like a melody (heard) from afar, this is where the insights find pleasure.
   He has acquired vitality through the tripartite ruddy (cows)—shining, he
   has acquired vitality.

3. Following his earlier [/eastern] direction he drives, ever observant. He
   aligns himself with the reins [/(sun's) rays] as a chariot lovely to
   see—a heavenly chariot lovely to see.
   The hymns, the manly powers, have come: they excite Indra to victory,
   when you [=Soma] and his mace become unbudgeable—unbudgeable in
   battles.

The last three hymns in the IXth Maṇḍala share a refrain, are all in paṅkti meter, and can be safely considered supplements to the original book on the grounds of language and subject matter (see Oldenberg 1888: 202).

IX.112 (824) Soma Pavamāna

Śiśu Āṅgirasa
4 verses: paṅkti

This charming little hymn has no obvious connection to soma except through its refrain (which it shares with the next two hymn, 113–114, also in the same meter), which sits oddly in each verse, and through the glancing mention of the soma-presser in 1d. The diversity of people's occupations and of their goals is the theme, presented in casual style and sometimes colloquial language (see especially the designations for father and mother in vs. 3), with the gently cynical message that what everyone really wants is gain or an easy life. The final verse (4) opens out to the nonhuman world.

Perhaps the most interesting verse, as a small window on realia, is the second one, which presents a rare picture of a smith and his equipment. The "old plants" must be for producing a hot fire, the "feathers of birds" for fanning the flames, and the stones are probably whetstones.

Casting about for a reason for the refrain and for the inclusion of this hymn in the IXth Maṇḍala—it may be that the point of the refrain is that, like the people and animals mentioned in the body of the text, the drop has its own goal, particular to itself, namely simply to seek Indra. Or perhaps the hymn was simply too delightful to abandon.

1. Truly our thoughts are various, and the obligations of peoples are
   different:
   a carpenter seeks the broken, a healer the injured, a formulator a man
   who presses soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
2. With old [=dry] plants, with the feathers of birds,
   and with stones—throughout the days the smith seeks a man who
   has gold.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

3. I am a bard, Papa a healer, and Mama is pushing a pestle.
   Having varying thoughts but (all) seeking goods, we follow (goods) like cows.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
4. The draft-horse seeks an easy-rolling chariot, beguilers a joke;
   the penis seeks the hairy split, the frog just seeks water.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

IX.113 (825) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
11 verses: paṅkti

The special interest of this hymn rests in the vision of heaven in its second half. Most strikingly, the imagery that describes this heaven—its freedom, joy, and satisfaction of all desires—occurs again in the Upaniṣads to characterize the mystical realization of the self. The hymn begins more or less as a conventional soma hymn, however. In verse 1 Indra is urged to drink the soma to strengthen himself for action, and in verse 2 Soma is commanded to purify himself, with the signature imperative *pavasva*. Verse 2 also introduces the theme of true ritual speech, which is taken up again in verses 4–6. Verse 3 seems to contain an interlude about the rain, which provides the sap to the soma plant, though the mythological sequence involving the Daughter of the Sun and the Gandharvas is obscure.

Verses 6 and 7 are the omphalos verses and provide a dramatic transition from the poet's description of the preparation of soma in the first half of the hymn to a vision of heaven (vss. 7–11), where immortality and the fulfillment of all desires are attained. Verse 6 is still set on the ritual ground and is in some ways the climax of the hymn, for it anticipates the drinking of the soma. Since soma is the drink of deathlessness, the ceremony becomes the place of immortality. Verse 6 is also grammatically incomplete, consisting only of a dependent clause and producing tension awaiting resolution in a main clause that will answer the implicit question: "what will happen in this 'where'?" The first half of verse 7 is responsive to 6 and thus builds the tension, but the locus of the "where" has changed: the poet has transformed the ritual space into the heavenly realm. The tension finds its release in the second half of verse 7, with the long-postponed main clause. The remaining verses reproduce the structure of verse 7, enlarging and embellishing the vision of the immortal world.

What links the first half of the hymn to the second, besides the transformative responsion of verses 6–7? The answer is not entirely clear, but it seems that the true speech that accompanies the preparation of the soma (vs. 2), perhaps the natural speech of the thunder (vs. 3), the true speech Soma himself speaks (vs. 4), the sacred formulation with which he is purified (vs. 5), and the verbal behavior of

the formulator of that formulation (vs. 6) provide Soma with the power to bestow immortality. He does so by *placing* the poet in the immortal realms, and placing is also a recurrent theme in the first half of the hymn: Indra places soma's strength in himself in verse 1; the rain is placed in soma as his juice in verse 3; soma is prepared by the Placer in verse 4; the sun was placed in the heavenly world in 7b, and finally the poet implores Soma to place him in the same world in 7c. The first two of these placings also involve clear transformation of substance: soma becomes Indra's strength; the rain becomes soma's sap. We can also see transformation in the Placer's preparation of soma in verse 4, as this preparation makes a physical substance into a drink of immortality, and ultimately in Soma's placing of the poet in the immortal world, which will make the poet himself immortal. The command of the second half of verse 7 "place me in that immortal, imperishable world" is followed by the command refrain of the remaining four verses (8–11), "there make me immortal," a sequence that appears to support the notion that the "placing" both precedes and causes the poet's transformation.

1. Let Indra, Vṛtra-smasher, drink the soma in the reed-filled (place),
   placing strength in himself as he is about to perform a great heroic deed.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
2. Purify yourself, o master of the directions, o munificent Soma, from the foamy (place).
   With real words of truth, with trust, and with fervor are you pressed.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
3. The buffalo grown strong through Parjanya [=thunder]—him [=rain] the Daughter of the Sun brought,
   him the Gandharvas received, him they placed as the juice in the soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
4. Speaking the truth, you whose brilliance is the truth, speaking what is real, you whose actions are real,
   speaking your trust, King Soma, you are prepared by the Placer, o Soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
5. Of (you) who are lofty and really strong the joint streams stream jointly.
   The juices of (you) who are rich in juice join together as (you) are being purified by the sacred formulation, tawny one.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
6. Where, o self-purifying one, the formulator, speaking metrical speech along with the pressing stone, makes himself great on soma, generating joy with soma—
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
7. Where the inexhaustible light is, in which world the sun is placed,
   in that one place me, o self-purifying one, in the immortal, imperishable world.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

8. Where the son of Vivasvant is king, where there is a ladder down from heaven,
   where those youthfully exuberant waters are, there make me immortal.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
9. Where one can move following one's desire in the three-vaulted, three-heavened (place) of heaven,
   where there are worlds filled with light, there make me immortal.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
10. Where there are desires and yearnings, where the upper surface of the coppery one [=Sun and soma?] is,
    where there is independence and satisfaction, there make me immortal.
    – O drop, flow around for Indra.
11. Where joys and delights, elations and exaltations dwell,
    where the desires of desire are obtained, there make me immortal.
    – O drop, flow around for Indra.

IX.114 (826) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
4 verses: paṅkti

This final hymn in the Soma Maṇḍala has the feeling of an afterthought. The seer addresses himself in verse 2, and the fortunate ritualist depicted in verse 1 is most likely Kaśyapa as well. In verse 3 he produces a triad of heptads, which have little to do with his call to Soma to protect us (3d). The final verse (4) repeats this call and enlarges on the dangers we wish to avoid.

1. The one who has stridden along the domains of the self-purifying drop,
   of him they say "(he will) have good offspring"—the one who has dedicated his thought to you, Soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
2. O seer Kaśyapa, strengthening up your songs with the praises of the mantra-makers,
   do homage to Soma the king, who was born as the lord of plants.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
3. Seven are the quarters, each with its separate sun; seven are the Hotars sacrificing in due order.
   The Āditya gods, who are seven—with them, o Soma, protect us.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
4. The oblation that is readied for you, o king—with that, o Soma, protect us.
   Let no hostile man overcome us, and let nothing whatsoever afflict us.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

X

Maṇḍala X

The Xth maṇḍala consists of 191 hymns like Maṇḍala I, but it has a more miscellaneous character and looser organization than its twin. As a whole, X was certainly the final addition to the codified Ṛgveda, and it contains many hymns with younger linguistic features and "popular" themes, or at least subjects that were not central to the soma sacrifice that dominates the rest of the Ṛgveda and determines the choice of hymns to be included or excluded in the rest of the text. These include life-cycle rituals like the funeral and the wedding, meta-reflections on the sacrifice and its parts, additional mythological material, celebrations of deities and divine forces peripheral to the soma sacrifice, dramatic monologues and dialogues, healing spells and curses, and so forth. However, it is easy to overemphasize the special character of X, for, when compared even with the chronologically close Atharvaveda, the intricate, playful, and allusive style, the lexicon, and the complex development of themes of most of X are quite distinctively Ṛgvedic.

Approximately half the maṇḍala is organized into collections generally attributed to individual poets. The first few of these collections are comparable in number of hymns to those in I, but starting with X.61 the hymns are arranged first in pairs (61–84) and then, beginning with X.85, as individual hymns.

This maṇḍala contains too many striking hymns, famous or unsung, to list here. The reader is referred to the introductions to the individual collections and hymns.

The first nine hymns of Maṇḍala X are assigned to two different poets: Trita Āptya 1–7 and Triśiras Tvāṣṭra ("Three-Headed Son of Tvaṣṭar") 8–9. Both of these are mythological figures, who appear as opponents in the same myth, which is narrated briefly at the end of X.8. Although the poets' names were generated from the mythological material and therefore do not reflect "real" poets, it is clear from their narrative connection that the hymns belong together (Oldenberg 1888: 232–35).

All of the Trita Āptya hymns (1–7) and the first two-thirds of X.8 are dedicated to Agni. The last three verses of X.8 (7–9), where the myth of the confrontation of Trita Āptya and his three-headed opponent is narrated, is assigned to Indra by the Anukramaṇī. The final hymn (X.9) is to the Waters.

X.1 (827) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

An appropriate beginning to an Agni cycle, this hymn recounts the birth of the ritual fire at dawn—the word *jātá* "at birth, once born" is repeated four times in the hymn (vss. 1–3, 6). But this nascent fire is endowed with cosmic importance, identified as the embryo of the two worlds (vs. 2) and compared to Viṣṇu in his lofty reach (vs. 3ab). The role of his hymnists is also given its due (3cd), and Agni's pivotal priestly role in the sacrifice is emphasized as the hymn continues (vss. 5cd–7). In the final verse (7) Agni is sent forth to bring the gods to the ritual ground, where the sacrifice can begin.

1. At the forefront of the dawns he has stood upright on high. Having gone out from darkness, he has come here with light.
   With his luminous beam, Agni, beautiful of limb, has filled all the seats at his birth.
2. At your birth you are the embryo of the two world-halves, o Agni, the beloved one dispersed among the plants.
   A brilliant babe, circling around the dark shades and the nights, you have come forth from your mothers, constantly roaring.
3. In just such a way as Viṣṇu, knowing his farthest (step), at his birth he protects on high the third (seat?).
   When with their mouth they have made their own milk [=poetry] for him, they with single mind chant to him here.
4. And then your birth-givers [=kindling wood], bringing nurture, proceed toward you, who are strengthened by food, with food;
   you go toward them in turn as they (acquire) other forms [=burn]. You are the Hotar among the clans of Manu.
5. (They chant) to the Hotar of the rite, possessing a brilliant chariot, the luminous beacon of every sacrifice,
   to Agni, who is the half-sharer with every god in his greatness, but in his beauty the guest of the peoples.
6. Agni, donning garments and ornaments on the navel of earth,
   ruddy at birth in the footprint of the refreshment—when set in front, o king, sacrifice to the gods here.
7. Because you have ever extended through heaven and earth, Agni, as a son extends both his parents,
   drive forth to those eager ones and convey the gods here, o youngest powerful one.

X.2 (828) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The most salient characteristic of the hymn is its concern with the ritual sequence (*ṛtú*) and with Agni as the god who ensures that these sequences are properly arranged and performed. In this feature it reminds us of the hymns devoted to the *ṛtugraha*s (the offering of "sequential cups" to an ordered set of divinities by an ordered series of priests); see I.15 and II.36–37. Although our hymn has much in common with those hymns, it does not provide the complete series, as those hymns do. Instead it focuses on Agni as the Hotar and the central figure in the sacrificial program—the senior partner, as it were, in the ritual enterprise involving both Agni and mortals as officiants. Agni's most important quality in this hymn is knowledge: he is called *vidvā́n* (or *pravidvā́n*) "knowing" four times in the hymn (vss. 1, 3, 4, 7), and "discerning" (*vijānán*) once (vs. 5). The epithet we have translated as "Establisher of Thought" in verse 2 (*mandhātár*) probably also participates in this theme, since it is etymologically almost identical to the name of the chief divinity in the Old Iranian pantheon, Ahura *Mazdā*, "Lord *Wisdom*" (< Proto Indo-Iranian **mn̥s-dhaH*). Mortals, by contrast, are very *un*-knowing (*áviduṣṭara*, vs. 4) and prone to moral and ritual mistakes (vss. 4–5).

Less prominent in the hymn, but noteworthy because of the importance of this theme later in the Xth Maṇḍala, is the distinction between the path going to the gods (vs. 3) and that to the forefathers (vs. 7), which figures prominently in the funeral hymns (X.14–18).

1. Please the gods, who are eager for it, o youngest one. Knowing the ritual sequences, o lord of the sequences, perform the sacrifice here.
   Those divine sequential-sacrificers—along with them, o Agni, you are the best sacrificer among the Hotars.
2. Pursue the office of Hotar and of Potar of the peoples. You are the Establisher of Thought and the Giver of Wealth, possessing the truth.
   (When) at the *svāhā*-call we shall make the oblations, let Agni the god sacrifice to the gods, (himself) deserving it.
3. We have come along the path of the gods, to carry forward along it what we can.
   Agni is the one who knows: he will perform the sacrifice; just he is the Hotar. He will arrange the rites, he the ritual sequences.
4. If we shall confound the commandments of you who know, o gods—we who are so very unknowing—
   knowing Agni fulfills all this through the ritual sequences by which he will arrange the gods.

5. If, naively in their thinking and scant in skill, mortals do not pay heed to the sacrifice,
discerning Agni, the Hotar, finding the resolve, will sacrifice to the gods as best sacrificer according to the ritual sequence.
6. Because the begetter has begotten you as the face of all the rites, their brilliant beacon,
so win by sacrifice, throughout the lands filled with superior men, eagerly sought cattle-rich refreshments belonging to all peoples.
7. You whom Heaven and Earth, you whom the waters, you whom Tvaṣṭar, the good begetter, has begotten,
you, knowing the way along the path leading to the forefathers—once kindled, beam brilliantly in all directions, o Agni.

X.3 (829) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The very moment of transition from night to dawn is the event celebrated in this hymn—the time when the ritual fire is kindled. Agni's triumph over Night, a female, and his welcoming of Dawn, likewise a female, are the subjects of the first three verses, and the whole hymn is pervaded by Agni's wide shining and the many words that express his radiance and brightness.

The poet is also fond of synesthetic images, as when his journeys "kindle" calls in verse 4, or his beams "purify themselves" (the signature verb of the soma drinks) like sounds (probably of soma as well) in verse 5. The poet's pet word for Agni, *aratí* "spoked wheel" (vss. 1, 2, 6, and 7), presumably originally referring to the shape of the fireplace, prompts a number of chariot and journey images through the hymn (vss. 4, 6, 7).

1. The powerful spoked wheel, now kindled, has appeared, to exercise his skill—he who is Rudra-wild but of easy birth, o king.
Observant, he beams widely with his lofty beam. Driving away black (Night), he comes to luminous (Dawn).
2. When with his form he has prevailed over black, mottled (Night), begetting the young woman [=Dawn], the child of a lofty father [=Heaven],
propping upright the radiance of the sun, the spoked wheel of heaven beams widely with the Vasus.
3. The auspicious male [=Sun], in company with the auspicious female [=Dawn], has come here. As her lover, he approaches his sister from behind.

Through the days with their good portents, Agni, spreading out, has prevailed over the night with his luminous colors.
4. Of this one here—of Agni, our kindly companion—his journeys are, as it were, kindling the calls of the lofty one [=pressing stone?];
on the journey of the lofty bull worthy to be invoked, the nights appear as his own beams.
5. Whose beams, like the sounds (of soma?), purify themselves when the lofty one, bringing the good day, is shining—
he who reaches heaven with his most eminent, sharpest, playful, highest radiant beams.
6. His snortings resound when he, his wheel-rim visible, is panting along with his teams—
he who, the best of gods, the spoked wheel of wide extent, beams widely with his age-old, luminous, crackling (flames).
7. Convey here something great for us and take your seat here as the spoked wheel of Heaven and Earth, the two youthful ones.
May Agni, powerfully thrusting, with his powerfully thrusting horses, the tempestuous one with his tempestuous ones, come here.

X.4 (830) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The usual high points of the birth and growth of Agni are covered in this hymn. What gives the hymn its character are the concentrated and somewhat unusual images that are studded through it. This is already evident in verse 1, where Agni (who is fire, after all) is compared to "the first drink in a wasteland"; presumably the point of comparison is that both are eagerly desired and it is not certain they will appear. A series of similes involving domestic animals follow in verses 2–3, while verses 4–6 concern the firewood that covers the nascent fire and that it begins to consume. The most elaborate and surprising image is found in verse 6, where the two arms of the priest who is tending the fire are compared to two thieves entering the woods, risking their lives. "Going into the woods" must refer to the manipulation of the firewood; the "risk" must be that of being burned. But why "thieves"? Most commentators think that the thieves are entering the wood to attack travelers and tie them up with cords—the ten cords compared to the priest's ten fingers. Perhaps, but the image is the more resonant for not being entirely transparent.

1. I begin the sacrifice to you and I propel my thought to you, so that you will become the one to be extolled at our invocations.
You are like the first drink in a wasteland, o Agni, for Pūru who seeks to attain (you), you age-old king.

2. You, upon whom the peoples converge like cows on a warm pen, o youngest one,
   you are the messenger of gods and of mortals. A great one, you act the go-between through the luminous realm.
3. Raising you like a thoroughbred foal, your mother carries you, seeking your joint delight.
   From the high plain you drive eagerly along the slope. Like a herd animal set loose, you are seeking to gain your livelihood.
4. We fools do not (know) your greatness, o you who are no fool; but, observant Agni, you surely know it.
   His covering [=wood] lies still; he moves, eating it with his tongue. The clanlord licks the young woman [=offering ladle] again and again.
5. Wherever it may be, he is born anew among the old ones. He stands in the wood—a grey one with a banner of smoke.
   Although no swimmer, he pursues the waters like a bull—he whom the mortals, of one mind, lead forward.
6. Like thieves who go into the woods risking their lives, the two (arms) have harnessed (the firewood? Agni?) with ten cords [=fingers].
   Here for you, Agni, is a newer inspired thought: hitch it up like a chariot with your blazing limbs.
7. Sacred formulation and homage and this song here shall always be strengthening for you, o Jātavedas.
   Guard our progeny and posterity, o Agni, and guard our own bodies unremittingly.

X.5 (831) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

A mystical and enigmatic hymn, with a number of conceptual and phraseological connections with other such hymns in the Ṛgveda. There are numerous conflicting interpretations of this hymn, not surprisingly. We will just present our own, with all due caution. In our view the standard theme of the birth of Agni/the ritual fire, its growing strength, and the rise of its flames and smoke to heaven is grafted onto a treatment of the mysteries of creation and a claim that poets (or, to be more explicit, "sage poets," *kaví*) have special access to these mysteries and indeed anticipate and direct the natural processes.

We should start by noting that the name Agni occurs only once in the hymn, at the beginning of the last half-verse (7c), though he is present in every verse. The hymn begins with a reference to the sea, but various parallels make it clear that this "sea" is really the sea in our heart and the source of poetic insight. The poet claims that this sea is a single entity, but that Agni, who has many births, emerges

from it. Already the poet is establishing the priority of poetry over even the god Agni and the ritual he represents. Pāda c seems to describe the birth of Agni from the kindling sticks (or possibly also the two world-halves, or night and day). His later journey to heaven is anticipated by his identification with a bird in pāda d.

In verse 2 the bullish buffaloes in the same nest and the mares with which they unite are presumably the flames of the fire, mingling and twisting in the fireplace. The birth of the fire is further described in verse 3, where again the two parents referred to are probably the kindling sticks but may also represent cosmic pairings. The cosmic aspect becomes clear in verse 4, where the fire rises between the two world-halves, which nourish it. The fire rises in the midspace with its flames in verse 5, while in verse 6 it is pictured as a pillar stretching to very highest heaven. Verse 6 reprises some of the vocabulary of the beginning of the hymn: the foundation (*dharúṇa*) of verse 1 and the nest (*nīḍá*) of verse 2 and thus transports the original earthly birthplace of fire to a new location.

The final verse (7) connects this heavenward journey of the fire [/Agni] with the issue of creation. The paradoxical phrase "both the nonexistent and the existent" that famously begins the creation hymn X.129 is a signal that the undifferentiated mass of matter (for want of a better word) that precedes real creation is present in the highest heaven where the male Dakṣa, the "skillful one" (in this case identified with Agni), and the female Aditi, the pair that set the processes of creation into motion in another famous creation hymn (X.72; see esp. vss. 4–5), are born. Agni is also identified with the androgynous bovine (both bull and milk-cow) that presides over creation in another treatment thereof (III.38; see esp. vs. 7). Thus "our" just-born ritual fire is identified as both the first created thing and the creator itself, and ritual time, as so often, recapitulates cosmic time.

We have not yet said anything about the poets' role, beyond noting the assertion of priority in verse 1. In verses 2–3 the poets oversee "the track of truth" and control the thread that others (priests? gods?) are pursuing; we interpret this to mean that the poets are directing or at least keeping safe the cosmic progress of the fire (see the trails in vs. 4), and in verse 6 it is the poets who establish the boundaries that define its journey. Also in verse 2 they anticipate the endpoint of the fire's journey by setting in a secret place "the highest names." Since creation is generally viewed as the differentiation of the mass mentioned above into individual entities with "name and form," the poets' control of the hidden names in verse 2 signals their participation in the creative process.

There is much that remains unclear in this hymn, particularly the seven boundaries in verse 6. But the connection between the birth of the ritual fire and the Ur-creation, mediated by the poets, seems to be the conceptual focus of this hymn.

1. The sea is (just) one, the foundation of riches, but he, having many births,
   gazes out from us, from our heart.
   He attends upon the udder in the lap of the two that are hidden. The
   track of the bird has been set down in the middle of the wellspring.

2. Cloaking themselves [/dwelling] in the same nest, the bullish buffaloes have united with the mares.
The sage poets protect the track of truth: they have placed in hiding the highest names.
3. The two possessing both truth and magical power have conjoined with one another. Having given him his measure, they have given birth to the babe, making him grow—
him who is the navel of everything, both the moving and the fixed. They [=gods? priests?] with their mind are also pursuing the thread of the poet,
4. For the trails of truth (follow) the well-born one, and refreshments follow (him) from of old for the prize.
The two world-halves, having cloaked themselves in their over-cloak, have strengthened (their own child) with ghee-drops and foods of honey.
5. Having bellowed [/being eager], the knowing one has carried up the seven ruddy sisters from the honey, to be seen.
He held them, born earlier, within the midspace. Seeking a covering, he has found the one belonging to Pūṣana.
6. The sage poets have fashioned seven boundaries. To just one of these has the narrow one gone.
The pillar stands on its foundations in the nest of the highest Āyu where the paths give out.
7. Both the nonexistent and the existent are in the highest heaven, at the birth of the skillful one in the lap of Aditi.
Agni is for us the first-born of truth, both a bull and a milk-cow in his previous lifetime.

X.6 (832) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

After the enigmas of the preceding hymn, the relative simplicity of this one comes as some relief. It begins with an annunciatory "here he is," and the remainder of the first three verses consists of relative clauses describing Agni. Relative clauses also dominate verses 5–6. The contents are fairly standard: Agni's radiance (esp. vss. 1–2), his role in the sacrifice and his reciprocal relationship with the poet and priest (vss. 3–5), and prayers for Agni's intervention in bringing help and other good things to us (vss. 6–7). These last two verses address Agni directly; in the first five verses he appears only in the 3rd person. Unlike the last hymn, in which the word *agní* appeared only in the last half-verse, this hymn contains a form of the name in every verse.

1. Here he is—Agni, in whose protection, in whose charge, and by whose help the singer thrives—
the far-radiant one who circles around, encircled by the peerless radiant beams of the dawn rays;
2. The far-radiant one who beams afar with his radiant beams together with the gods—truthful, untiring Agni—
who has pursued comradeship for his comrades, undeviating like a teamed steed;
3. Who has control of every effort to pursue the gods and has control of the dawn at its dawning throughout a full lifetime;
Agni, upon whom a man possessing an invulnerable chariot [=sacrifice] props his oblations zealously with fortifying (hymns).
4. Grown strong with the fortifying (hymns) and being delighted by the chants, with swift flight he goes to the gods.
As the gladdening, best-sacrificing Hotar, with his tongue Agni sprinkles the gods, mingling together (with them).
5. With hymns and reverent gestures attract him here at dawn like Indra—quivering Agni,
whom the inspired poets hymn with their thoughts—Jātavedas, the tongue of the overpowering (gods).
6. You in whom all good things have joined together, like horses forming a team at a contest in their own way—
o Agni, attract here, near to us, the forms of help most cherished by Indra.
7. Then, o Agni, because, having sat down with greatness, immediately on being born you became the one to be invoked,
the gods followed your will. Then the foremost helpers became strong.

X.7 (833) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This last of the Trita Āptya hymns is not particularly noteworthy, though it shows some affinities with hymns earlier in the Trita Āptya sequence. Verses 5–6 point to Agni's role as "seasonal sacrificer" (*ṛtv-íj*), a role explored in X.2. Agni's supreme competence as a sacrificer is contrasted with the potential incompetence of the mortal sacrificer in verse 4, as in X.2.5. Otherwise the hymn seems primarily concerned with the material gain that will come to the mortal sacrificer for his ritual efforts (see esp. vss. 1d, 2, 4, and 7).

1. Provide well-being to us from heaven and from earth, (for us) to sacrifice for a full lifetime, o god Agni.

Might we be accompanied by your visible signs, o wondrous one. Make wide space for us in exchange for our wide lauds, o god.

2. These thoughts were born for you, o Agni. They applaud your generosity with its cows and horses,
when the mortal has attained the benefit from you, acquiring it by (these) thoughts, o well-born good one.

3. I consider Agni our father, Agni our friend, Agni our brother and our comrade forever.
I do honor to the face of lofty Agni, the worshipful luminous (face) of the Sun in heaven.

4. Our insights are effective and bring gain to us, o Agni. Whomever you, as his own Hotar, safeguard in his house,
(let) that truthful one (be) possessed of chestnut horses and much livestock; for him let there be treasure throughout the days and daytimes.

5. To the one established throughout the days like an ally for the harnessing, the ancient sequential-sacrificer and lover of the rite,
to Agni did the Āyus give birth with their arms and install among the clans as their Hotar.

6. Perform sacrifice by yourself to the gods in heaven, o god. How can a callow man without discernment do it for you?
Just as you sacrificed to the gods, o god, according to the ritual sequences, so perform sacrifice to your own body, o well-born one.

7. Become our helper, Agni, and our herdsman; become the creator of vitality and the provider of vitality for us.
And grant to us the giving of oblations, o very great one, and safeguard our bodies unremittingly.

X.8 (834) Agni (1–6), Indra (7–9)

Triśiras Tvāṣṭra
9 verses: triṣṭubh

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn, along with the following one (X.9 to the Waters), to a different poet from the first seven Agni hymns of the maṇḍala, which are attributed to Trita Āptya, it is fairly clear that these nine hymns belong together, on the basis of criteria like shared phraseology, as well as larger structural considerations. (See Oldenberg 1888: 233–34.) The poet of X.8–9 is given as Triśiras Tvāṣṭra, a speaking name: "Three-Headed Son of Tvaṣṭar" and a figure who is the mythological enemy of Trita. Thus, as Oldenberg saw, the two poets to whom this sequence of nine hymns is ascribed are narratively linked, and both names were probably assigned as poets to these hymns because of the mythological narrative sketched in this particular hymn.

Trita's defeat of his three-headed foe, also known as Viśvarūpa ("having all forms"), is treated in the last three verses of our hymn (7–9). The myth goes back to Indo-Iranian times in one form or other. In the Younger Avestan Hom Yašt (Yasna 9–11), Zarathushtra asks the Haoma (= Skt. Soma) the names and stories of the men who first pressed him. In Y 9.7–8 Haoma names a certain Āϑβiia (note the similarity to, but not identity with, Āpt(i)ya) as the second man to press him, whose son, Θraētaona, smote a mighty serpent-dragon (Aži Dahāka; cf. the Sanskrit cognate *áhi* "serpent" frequently used of Vṛtra) with three heads (*ϑrikamərəδa*; cf. *mūrdhán* "head" in vss. 3 and 6 of this hymn). Immediately thereafter (Y 9.10–11) he identifies Θrita (= Skt. Trita) as his third presser, one of whose sons defeats another formidable dragon (also *ažī*) in a particularly imaginative fashion. The names Āϑβiia and Θrita, though differently distributed, and the three-headed monster speak strongly for the kinship of the two myths, though they are not identical in all their features.

What is not clear is why this little mythic vignette has been appended at the end of this Agni cycle, though we will suggest some reasons at the end of the introduction. Here and elsewhere in Vedic the story of Trita Āptya's slaying of three-headed Viśvarūpa is associated with Indra (even in this hymn; see vss. 8–9), not Agni, and it is assimilated in several ways to the better-known Vala myth—generally an Indra myth. First, Trita Āptya begins his quest in a cave or hole of some sort (vs. 7a), and the happy result of the defeat of Viśvarūpa is the release of his cows (vss. 8–9)—just as the cows confined in the Vala cave are released at the end of that myth. Moreover, the "familial" (vs. 7) or "ancestral" (vs. 8) weapons Trita employs in the fight appear to be mental and verbal (see especially the "visionary thought" he seeks in 7b and his "speaking" his weapons in 7d). In the Vala myth Indra and his helpers, the Aṅgirases, break open the cave with verbal spells, not physical weapons. Since the corresponding Avestan version does not have these elements, it is likely that these Vala-like features were grafted onto the inherited myth, whose popularity was perhaps waning in Ṛgvedic times. (It does have a robust revival in Vedic prose.)

The first few verses of the hymn for the most part contain standard Agni fare, though with a cosmic dimension. The fire, conceived of also as a powerful male animal, reaches through the worlds to heaven itself (vs. 1), just after it is born (vs. 2). His birth and installation are further treated in verse 3, where the ritual references probably also have cosmic referents. The hymn begins to take an odd turn in verse 4. In that verse Agni "sets seven steps," thereby "begetting an alliance (or, the god Mitra)." The seven-step reference is to the culminating ritual action particularly of the marriage ceremony, after which the marriage is irrevocable, when the bride and groom take seven steps together; other alliances can be assimilated to the marriage alliance by the performance of the seven steps (see Jamison 1996a: 120–23). These seven steps are always taken beside the ritual fire, and as Proferes (2007) has discussed at length (on this particular passage, see p. 61), the fire is also a symbol of the alliances made by social groups. Through those alliances the fire itself is strengthened and increased, hence the "for the sake of your own body" in this verse. The reason for this intrusion of the social world at this point in the hymn is unclear,

since heretofore the focus has been entirely on Agni. In the following verses (5–6) Agni is identified with, or transformed into, a series of divinities and functional roles. Perhaps these identifications were suggested by the alliance generated in verse 4, representing the web of associations in which Agni participates.

The six Agni verses end with Agni setting his head (*mūrdhán*) in heaven. As noted above, the hymn in fact contains two occurrences of *mūrdhán* (vss. 3, 6), and its Avestan cognate *kamərəδan* (with pejorative *ka*-prefix), in the bahuvrīhi *Θri-kamərəδa* "having three heads," qualifies the monster killed by Āθβiia's son. The corresponding form in the Trita myth in this hymn has a different word for head, *-śíras-* (acc. sg. m. *tri-śīrṣā́ṇam*, vs. 8). However, the Ṛgveda does contain an occurrence of *tri-mūrdhán*—but referring to Agni, in the phrase *trimūrdhā́naṃ saptáraśmim* "having three heads and seven reins" (I.146.1). The three heads are most likely the three ritual fires, the seven reins possibly the seven priests, but the important thing is that this same phrase, "having three heads and seven reins," is found in our hymn X.8, describing the enemy Viśvarūpa (8c). This, we would submit, is the initial point of contact between this Agni hymn and the Trita saga appended to it: the old Indo-Iranian myth used the word **tri-mr̥Hdhan* for the three-headed beast. But the epithet can also be used positively as a descriptor of Agni with his three representative fires on the ritual ground. The poet is playing with the delicious positive/negative polarities of the epithet, and signals the connection between the Agni portion of the hymn and the little Trita myth by using the word originally used of the monster, *mūrdhán*, elsewhere in the hymn.

But there may be another connection. As we noted, Agni undergoes several transformations in the last verses of his section of the hymn. And it is quite possible that verse 7 is suggesting yet another transformation, into Trita or "the third (fire)," being born in the fireplace, seeking poetic vision and ritual release. Agni sometimes seems to be called Trita (see esp. X.46.3, 6), and the Trita/Viśvarūpa story may be introduced here via a modulation through Agni identified with Trita.

1. With his lofty beacon Agni drives forth; the bull keeps bellowing to the two world-halves.
   He has reached up even to the farthest ends of heaven; the buffalo has grown strong in the lap of the waters.
2. He rejoices as an embryo, as a hump-backed bull. No miscarriage, the calf has bellowed vehemently.
   Causing (the oblations) to be lifted up to the conclave of gods, he goes first within his own dwelling places.
3. He who has seized the head of his two parents [=Heaven and Earth? kindling sticks?], (him) they [=priests] have set down at the rite as the sun's undulating flood.
   At his flight the ruddy females [=flames? dawns?] with the horse [=fire?] as their foundation find pleasure in their own bodies within the womb of truth.

4. Because you go at the forefront of every dawn, o good one, you have become the far-radiant one at (the time of) the twins [=Night and Dawn?].
   For truth you have set your seven steps, begetting an alliance [/Mitra] for the sake of your own body.
5. You become the eye and herdsman of great truth; you become Varuṇa when you pursue (your tasks) for truth.
   You become the Child of the Waters, o Jātavedas; you become the messenger of him in whose oblation you will take pleasure.
6. You become the leader of the sacrifice and of airy space, where you are accompanied your kindly teams of horses.
   In heaven you have set your head, which wins the sun, and you have made your tongue to be the conveyor of oblations, o Agni.
7. With his resolve, Trita [/the "third" fire], within a cave [/cover]—seeking a visionary thought according to the ways of his distant forefather,
   longing for companionship in the lap of his parents, speaking his own familial weapons—pursues (his tasks).
8. That one, Āptya, knowing his ancestral weapons, urged on by Indra, attacked.
   Having smashed the three-headed, seven-reined (monster), Trita let loose the cows, even those of Tvaṣṭar's son.
9. Indra split (the heads) off the one trying to reach up to much power—the lord of settlements (split them off) the one who thought himself (the same).
   Having made the cows of Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭar, his own, he twisted off his three heads.

X.9 (835) Waters

Triśiras Tvāṣṭra or Sindhudvīpa Āmbarīṣa
9 verses: gāyatrī, except triṣṭubh 8–9

The last four verses of this hymn (6–9) are identical with I.23.20–23 (save for the absence of I.23.20d) and treat the healing and expiatory properties of the Waters, who provide healing remedies (vss. 6–7) while also carrying away the detritus of moral misbehavior (vs. 8). The paradox of "fire in the waters" (as embodied elsewhere in the figure of Apām Napat "Child of the Waters," identified with Agni) is also alluded to in verses 6 and 8. The healing and life-giving qualities of the Waters are also found in the two preceding verses (4–5).

The first three verses of the hymn stand somewhat apart from the remainder of the hymn and progress from the bland and generic to a rather surprising conclusion. Verse 1 simply describes the Waters as refreshing and asks them for nourishment

and happiness. In verse 2 the refreshment is specified as juice or sap (*rása*) and implicitly compared to breast milk, since the Waters themselves are compared to mothers. And then there is the very puzzling verse 3, which can only be understood as an enlargement of that simile, for it is said that the Waters "animate and beget us." But even more puzzling than their apparent role in giving birth to "us" is their purpose in so doing: so that we will go to be "fit" for the dwelling of an unidentified third party. This third party is generally assumed, most likely correctly, to be the patron of the sacrifice, and the poet/sacrificer calls upon the Waters to (re)vivify him, send him to the house of the patron, and make him fit to render service to this patron in the form of hymns and ritual labor—but the stark economy with which this sentiment is expressed challenges the modern interpreter.

1. Since you Waters are sheer refreshment, so destine us for nourishment
   and to see great happiness.
2. Your most beneficent juice—make us have a share in that here,
   like eager mothers (their milk).
3. Let us, as your (offspring), go to be fit for him for whose peaceful
   dwelling you animate
   and beget us, o Waters.
4. Let the goddesses, the Waters, be luck for us to prevail, for us to drink.
   Let them flow to us for luck and life.
5. Those who are mistresses of things of value, ruling over the settled
   domains,
   the Waters do I beseech for a healing remedy.
6. "Within the waters," Soma said to me, "are all healing remedies
   and Agni who is weal to all."
7. O Waters, fully grant healing and protection for my body
   and (for me) to see the sun for a long time.
8. O Waters, carry this away, whatever trouble is in me—
   whether I have committed deceit or I have cursed—as well as untruth.
9. O Waters, today I have followed (you). We have united with your sap.
   Full of milk, o Agni, come here. Merge me with luster.

The next ten hymns (X.10–19) form a Yama cycle, though the subject matter found in the individual hymns is quite various. Yama, the son of Vivasvant, is king of the land of the dead because he was the first mortal to die. Yet he was apparently born immortal (see esp. I.83.5) and chose to become mortal, subject to death, "for the sake of the gods... and for the sake of offspring" (X.13.4). The opening hymn in the cycle, the dialogue of Yama and his twin sister Yamī, on the fraught topic of embarking on incestuous sex in order to produce offspring, addresses Yama's change of status and his choice, but in a deliberately oblique and misleading fashion, as Yama spurns the sexual advances of his sister, and at the end of their bitter argument there seems little likelihood of children.

The last six hymns in this cycle (X.14–19) are collectively known as funeral hymns. The first, X.14, is devoted especially to Yama in his role as king of the realm of the dead, while the others, especially 15–18, concern various aspects of death and the treatment of the dead—for example, the forefathers who preceded us to Yama's realm in X.15, the cremation fire in X.16, the funeral itself in X.18. The intermediate hymns, X.11–13, have less superficially clear connections to the Yama saga, but both X.12 (vss. 6–7) and X.13 (vss. 4–5) make important comments on Yama and on Yama's choice.

There is also an underlying unifying theme, that of duality and twinned-ness: the absolute disjunction between and the ultimate complementarity and unity of the mortal and the immortal, life and death, men and gods, men and women, heaven and earth, sacred and profane. It is appropriate that the cycle should begin with the *dialogue* between the primal twins, Yama and Yamī, whose very names mean "twin" and who bridge the gap between mortal and immortal.

X.10 (836) Dialogue of Yama and Yamī

Yama Vaivasvata and Yamī Vaivasvatī
14 verses: triṣṭubh

This justly famous (and much discussed) hymn presents a tense dialogue between a pair of twins, the male Yama and female Yamī (*yamá* means "twin"; *yamī́* is the feminine form), who become the first mortals. Yamī́, who speaks first, urges her twin brother to have sex with her, so that they can have children and continue their line in the approved manner. Yama indignantly rejects her advances, outraged by the idea of incest and certain that the divine guardians of moral order will see the act and punish them.

It is impossible in a short introduction to do justice to the richness of this hymn and the extraordinary skill with which the poet deploys grammatical categories such as person, number, and verb modality in service of the condensed drama of their encounter. Both Yamī and Yama make legalistic arguments, often using juridical turns of phrase, and especially in the first part of the hymn they distance the personal and emotional implications of their speech by regularly using plural and 3rd-person forms to refer to each other. It is not until the last word of verse 4 that one of them uses a 1st-person *dual* ("we two") form. They also use dueling divine models for the relationships they are arguing for: Yama cites their near ancestors, "the Gandharva in the waters and the watery maiden," as reason not to violate the incest taboo (vs. 4) and Mitra and Varuṇa as stern enforcers (vs. 6) with spies everywhere (vs. 8)—while Yamī claims that Tvaṣṭar, who shapes embryos in the womb, made them a married couple already in the womb (vs. 5) and twice (vss. 5, 9) invokes as their divine counterparts Heaven and Earth, a notoriously incestuous pair (as she makes quite explicit in 9c). The use and placement of kinship terms

in the hymn is also notable, including the fact that "brother" and "sister" are not encountered until verse 11. It is also striking that the names of the speakers do not appear until verse 7.

The emotional temperature of the hymn rises significantly at that very point. Yamī abandons her legalistic arguments—that they need to have offspring, that they were already a married couple in the womb—in favor of a naked expression of sexual desire. Yama remains unmoved, but the roiling emotions are reflected in the ragged meter of some of the later verses (12–13), especially in the latter verse where Yamī breaks off her speech in frustration in a very short pāda containing two occurrences of a word (*batá*) found nowhere else and exhibiting aberrant phonology. Our rendering of the word aims at the level of slangy insult to which *batá* appears to belong.

The hymn ends in an impasse. Yama remains obdurate and urges Yamī to find another lover—a difficult quest when there are no other mortals! However, given the rest of his history, sketched briefly above, we must assume that he gave in in the end, on the evidence of X.13.4.

1. [Yamī:] I would turn my partner right here to partnership—even though he has gone across many (realms), across the flood.
   A (ritual) adept should provide a grandson for his father, envisioning his furtherance on the earth.
2. [Yama:] Your partner doesn't want that partnership, in that she [=sexual partner] will have the same "marks" [=family characteristics] (though) dissimilar form [=gender].
   The sons of the great one, the heroes of the Lord, the upholders of heaven, look around widely.
3. [Yamī:] The immortals *do* want this: a legacy of the one and only mortal.
   Your mind has (already) been set upon my mind, upon me. As husband, you should enter the body of (your) wife.
4. [Yama:] What we have not done before, should (we do it) now? While proclaiming truths, we would [/should we] murmur untruth?
   The Gandharva in the waters and the watery maiden—that is our umbilical tie; therefore our kinship is of the highest.
5. [Yamī:] (Even) in the womb the Begetter made us two a married couple, god Tvaṣṭar, the impeller who provides all forms.
   No one transgresses his commandments. Heaven and Earth take heed of this about us.
6. [Yama:] Who knows about this first day? Who has seen it; who will proclaim it here?
   Lofty is the ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa. Will you speak about superior men [=gods] with deviant (speech), lubricious one?
7. [Yamī:] Desire for Yama has come to me, Yamī, to lie together in the same womb [/place].
   Like a wife to her husband I would yield my body. We would "let 'er rip" like two chariot wheels.

8. [Yama:] They do not stand still; they do not blink—the spies of the gods who roam about here.
   With another than me, lubricious one, drive off straightaway; with him "let 'er rip" like two chariot wheels.
9. [Yamī:] Night and day she would do service to him. She could for an instant trip up the eye of the sun.
   The couple has the same (kin-)ties as Heaven and Earth. Yamī could bear the unbrotherly (act) of Yama.
10. [Yama:] Later generations will come, in which kin will perform the unkindred (act).
    Keep plumping up your arm as pillow for a (real) bull. Seek another than me as husband, well-portioned one.
11. [Yamī:] What will "brother" (mean) when there will be no refuge. And what will "sister," if Dissolution will come down?
    Driven by desire many times I murmur this: mingle your body with my body.
12. [Yama:] Verily, I must not mingle my body with your body. They call him evil who will go down on his sister.
    With another than me arrange your pleasures. Your brother does not want this, well-portioned one.
13. [Yamī:] You jerk, you really are a jerk, Yama! Truly we have not found mind and heart in you.
    Another (woman) will surely embrace you, like a girthband a yoked (horse), like a vine a tree.
14. [Yama:] You (will embrace) another, Yamī, and another will embrace you—like a vine a tree.
    Seek his mind—or he yours. Then make yourself a very happy compact.

X.11 (837) Agni

Havirdhāna Āṅgi
9 verses: jagatī 1–6, triṣṭubh 7–9

This hymn, which has some phraseological echoes of X.10 but lacks its mythological content, falls into two metrical parts, which correspond to its thematic structure. The last three verses (7–9), in triṣṭubh, are fairly straightforward, describing the benefits that accrue to a mortal who serves the ritual fire and calling on Agni to bring the divinities to the sacrifice and let it begin.

The first six verses, in jagatī, are far more complex, and, when viewed as a piece, without the three triṣṭubh verses at the end, turn out to have an omphalos structure: the middle pair of verses (3–4) are parallel in structure, have the phrase *agníṃ hótāram* "Agni (as) Hotar" opening their final pādas, and together treat both the

initiation of the current sacrifice and the charter myths for the introduction of the two ritual substances, fire and soma (with concomitant juggling of verb tenses). In verse 3 the first sacrificer, Manu, is present at the kindling of the ritual fire; verse 4 sketches the famous tale of the falcon's theft of soma from heaven.

The outer verse pairs, 1–2 and 5–6, treat these two substances and their deified counterparts, fire/Agni and soma/Soma, both simultaneously and in parallel, with the referent often left unclear. The final verse of this section (6) is especially busy, with both Agni and Soma actively performing their ritual tasks at the same time (and perhaps under the same descriptions; see esp. 6c). The tentative identifications in that verse are made on the basis of the use of the phraseology in other parts of the Ṛgveda. For example, the exact phrase "he trembles with his thought" is used of Soma in IV.71.3, and the verb translated as "he displays his power" (*taviṣyá*) in that same pāda has Soma as its subject in its two other occurrences. However, it is very likely that the poet expected the audience to consider both possibilities for the referent in each case and to grasp thereby the underlying commonalities of the two ritual substances. The first section of the hymn is thus a simpler example of the conflation of Agni and Soma found in the fiendish hymn V.44.

1. The bull [=Soma] has milked out his draughts of milk for the bull
   [=Indra] by the milking of heaven—he the youthfully exuberant,
   undeceivable (son) of Aditi.
   He [=Agni] knows everything, as Varuṇa does, through his insight. Let
   him who is worthy of the sacrifice perform sacrifice throughout the
   sacrificial sequences.
2. The Gandharvī is murmuring, and let (that) watery maiden protect my
   mind all around at the bellowing of the bellowing (bull) [=Soma].
   Let Aditi set us down in the middle of what we desire. Our eldest brother
   [=Agni] will proclaim (it) first.
3. And even now Dawn, rich in cattle, rich in glory, accompanied by the
   Sun, has dawned for Manu,
   when they [=priests] beget Agni as Hotar for the ritual distribution—him
   being eager for it and following the will of those who are (also) eager.
4. And this drop here [=Soma], widespread and widely visible, has the bird,
   the falcon that was sent (for it), brought here to the rite,
   when the Ārya clans choose wondrous Agni as their Hotar. And so was
   his insight born.
5. You are always delightful, like pasture lands to a prosperous man,
   (when,) o Agni, you conduct good rites with the libations of Manu,
   or when, having ritually labored and having gained for the inspired poet
   a prize worthy of hymns, you journey near with abundant (gifts).
6. Rouse his [=Agni's] two parents [=kindling sticks], (as) a lover (rouses) his
   "piece of luck" [=girl]. The gladdening one [=Soma] is seeking to attain (the
   cows?) and sends (speech) from his heart.
   The draft-horse [=Agni and/or Soma?] is speaking; the bounteous one
   [=Agni?] is performing his work well. The lord [=Soma?] displays his
   power; he trembles (in poetic inspiration) with his thought.
7. Whatever mortal will attain your favor, o Agni, son of strength, he is
   famed beyond (all).
   Acquiring refreshment for himself, being conveyed by his horses,
   brilliant and formidable, he attends upon (you) through the days.
8. When, o Agni, this assembly will become godly among the gods, a
   sacrificial one, o sacrificial one,
   and when you will share out treasures, o you of independent will, then
   pursue a share for us rich in goods.
9. Hear us, Agni, in your seat, in your abode. Yoke the speeding chariot of
   the immortal one.
   Convey here to us the two world-halves, whose sons are the gods. Don't
   be the absent one among the gods; you should be here!

X.12 (838) Agni

Havirdhāna Āṅgi
9 verses: triṣṭubh

On first reading, this hymn appears to be full of non-sequiturs and false starts, but further consideration allows some coherence to be wrung from it. It begins innocently enough, with two verses devoted to the sacrifice initiated by Agni as Hotar, with Heaven and Earth as witnesses—picking up the topic of the last verse of the preceding hymn (X.11.9). In our view, the third verse continues that theme: an oblation derived from a cow, probably ghee, is made into the fire; thus it is Agni's "own acquisition." This sacrificial event in some sense generates the gods and their cosmic activity, which is framed as a *yájus* or sacrificial formula, and it also generates the rain, the "heavenly ghee." We may see here an early example of the famous Upaniṣadic doctrine of the Five Fires and the water-cycle, whereby the oblations, produced from the plants and animals on the earth, rise to heaven as smoke and return to earth as water, to start the cycle anew. The sacrifice begun in verse 1 seems to end with verse 4, where Heaven and Earth are again (as in vs. 1) called upon to hear us. What has been added conceptually is the notion that Heaven and Earth also participate in the cycle that the sacrifice controls, by producing rain ("honey") in the course of time.

The second half of the hymn (vss. 5–8; vs. 9 is repeated from the preceding hymn, X.11.9) appears to be on another subject, or several other subjects, entirely. It begins with the worried speaker speculating on what wrong we have done to Varuṇa, contrasting the unfathomable reactions of that god with the more forthright and reliable Mitra. It ends (vs. 8cd) with the perhaps over-hopeful assertion that Mitra, along

with Aditi and Savitar, will declare us blameless to Varuṇa. But the verses in between (6–7) at first seem unconnected with this current drama. It is our contention, however, that these verses, especially verse 6 about Yama, provide the mythological support for the poet's hope that his relationship with Varuṇa can be repaired.

Verse 6 needs to be read in the context of X.10, the famous dialogue between Yama and his twin sister Yamī, but also of X.13.4, another cryptic verse about Yama in this cycle of hymns. In X.10, as is well known, Yama and Yamī argue about her desire to have sex with him in order to produce offspring. He strongly resists, condemning (X.10.2) their possible pairing by characterizing it with the phrase also quoted in 6b of this hymn: *sálakṣmā yád víṣurūpā bhávāti*, "that (the female) will have the same 'marks' [=family characteristics] (though) dissimilar form [=gender]" in our rendering. This phrase has received many different interpretations; we believe that it defines the forbidden incestuous partner Yamī as being of the same family but of a different shape—female rather than male—as Yama. The dialogue of X.10 ends with the issue unresolved. It is X.13.4 that seems to give us the answer. In that verse Yama "chose death" for the sake of the gods and for the sake of offspring "did not choose immortality." It seems that Yama was born immortal (see esp. I.83.5) but chose to forego this state, in order to produce children and also to institute the sacrifice to the gods. This act of self-abnegation and the change of state it produced is, in our view, what is being celebrated in verse 6 here. The poet first (pāda a) mentions Yama's "immortal (name)," which he does not want to think about—since it reminds him of the taint of incest (pāda b), but his other name, by implication the "mortal" one, is a happy one to think about and ensures Agni's protection for the thinker. (Note that the actual name Yama is only mentioned in the second instance.)

In the next verse (7) we move to the seat of Vivasvant, a common kenning for the ritual ground, but in this context it is important to remember that Yama is a descendant of Vivasvant (see his patronymic in, e.g., nearby X.14.1 *vaivasvatám... yamám*). The juxtaposition of Yama in verse 6 and Vivasvant in verse 7 reminds the audience that Yama chose death in order to institute the sacrifice, and further reminds them that when they perform sacrifice they are replicating the actions of Yama, which transformed his bad reputation ("name difficult to contemplate") into a good one. Thus, though we still have no idea why the gods do what they do (see 7ab, 8ab), we trust in the power of our sacrifice to make things right with these inscrutable gods.

1. Heaven and Earth, who speak what is real, become the first to hear in accordance with truth,
   when the god, setting mortals to sacrifice, takes his seat as Hotar facing (them), as he comes to his own life.
2. As the god encompassing the gods in accordance with truth, first convey our oblation, as the observant one,
   possessing a beacon of smoke, foaming with radiance by kindling, you, the gladdening constant Hotar, who sacrifice better with your speech.
3. It's the god's own acquisition: the immortal (drink) that comes from the cow. "Those born therefrom uphold the two wide (worlds)"—
   this sacrificial formula of yours do all the gods follow, when the speckled (cow) gives as her milk the heavenly ghee, the water.
4. I sing your work [/waters], o ghee-backed pair, to strengthen (it/them). Hear me, o Heaven and Earth, you two world-halves.
   When the daytimes and the days will go (on the way) leading to the other life, then let our parents [=Heaven and Earth?] hone us with honey.
5. Why has king (Varuṇa) grasped [/complained about] us? What commandment of his have we transgressed? Who fully understands?
   For Mitra, even when angry [/moving crookedly], is like a signal-call (going) to the gods, also (like) the victory-prize of those driving (in chariots).
6. Difficult to contemplate is the name of the immortal (male) in the case "that (the female) will have the same 'marks' [=family characteristics] (though) dissimilar form [=gender]."
   Whoever will contemplate Yama's (name that is) good to contemplate—protect him unremittingly, o lofty Agni.
7. At which ritual distribution the gods reach exhilaration and uphold (the two worlds) at the seat of Vivasvant [=ritual ground]—
   they placed the light in the sun and the nights in the moon: the two [=sun and moon] move around the brightness [=Agni] without wearying—
8. On which cryptic thought the gods converge—we do not know it.
   May Mitra, Aditi, and god Savitar here declare us to Varuṇa to be without offense.
9. Hear us, Agni, in your seat, in your abode. Yoke the speeding chariot of the immortal one.
   Convey here to us the two world-halves, whose sons are the gods. Don't be the absent one among the gods; you should be here!

X.13 (839) The Soma Carts

Havirdhāna Āṅgi or Vivasvant Āditya
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 5

According to the Anukramaṇī, this hymn is addressed to the two havirdhāna carts, the carts on which the soma is brought to the place of sacrifice. Although the carts are not explicitly mentioned in the hymn, this assignment is undoubtedly correct and confirmed by the recitation of the first two verses in the later canonical ritual when the carts are pushed into place. The first four verses are also found in

Atharvaveda (Śaunaka) XVIII.38–41 (in slightly different order) in a large collection of funeral verses, while verse 5 is paralleled by Atharvaveda VII.57.2. The hymn presents a number of difficulties, and the conceptual relationship among the verses is not always clear. Nonetheless, for various reasons (to be sketched below) it seems likely that the Ṛgvedic hymn forms a unity.

The first two verses are the clearest and have the clearest ritual content: the two soma carts are hitched up, the signal for the sacrifice is given, and the carts are brought to the sacrificial ground.

After these two verses of relative clarity, we are plunged into the numerological obscurity of verse 3—not surprisingly the middle verse with the typical form of an omphalos verse. (Oldenberg refers to its "vague mysticism" [*vage Mystik*] and suggests resignation as a proper response for the interpreter [1913: 135 = 1967: 822].) It does not help that the first, scene-setting pāda contains the impossible word *rúp*, which arouses the same bewilderment in its other occurrence, IV.5.7. Nonetheless, we can sketch some parameters for the interpretation of the verse, though our interpretation is quite insecure in detail. First, it seems to continue the ritual scenario of the first two verses, and the 1st-person speaker, with his four 1st-person verbs, matches the speaker of the first pāda of the hymn. In the first pāda of this verse we suggest (following an offhand suggestion of Oldenberg's [1913: 136 = 1967: 823]) that the "five steps" (*páñca padā́ni*) of the *rúp* (here translated "mount") are the five verses of this very hymn. The "four-footed" (*cátuṣpadī*) entity in the next verse must be feminine in gender, and various suggestions have been made for what noun to supply. We believe that its reference is deliberately ambiguous: it may refer to the four pādas of a verse (*ṛ́c* fem.), thus continuing the (possible) theme of 3a. It has also been suggested that the noun is *vartaní* "course, track" (also feminine), and the speaker is literally following the track of the two soma carts, each with two wheels, thus four wheel-ruts altogether. The only other Ṛgvedic occurrence of the adjective "four-footed" is in I.164.41, where it modifies the noun *gaurī́* "buffalo cow" referring to Speech, which is regularly said to consist of four parts. Thus in our view this pāda refers both to ritual action (following the four wheel-ruts of the carts) and ritual speech (the four-pāda verse), and ritual speech in particular calls to mind Speech in general. In the next pāda (3c) the poet seems to make explicit the equivalence of his particular ritual speech and Speech in general by claiming to make a single syllable the equivalent of Speech herself. This mystical treatment of the ritual ends with a purification (3d).

Verse 4 veers off in a different direction and alludes obliquely to what we might call the Felix Culpa ("fortunate fall") of Yama, who, though born immortal (at least according to I.83.5 and possibly X.17.1), chose death over immortality in order to sacrifice to the gods (pāda a) and produce offspring (pādas b and d), whereas the gods constituted their sacrifice through Bṛhaspati and avoided death but also do not reproduce. (So, roughly, Geldner.) This fleeting reference to Yama's choice seems to answer the question left hanging at the end of X.10—will Yama yield to Yamī's frenzied entreaties for sex or will he maintain his ascetic distance? On the basis of the offspring mentioned here, he seems to have yielded, though in the present verse the role of Yamī has been elided and the agency rests with Yama—he "chose."

But why, one may well ask, is this bit of Yama's history found in a hymn dedicated to the soma carts? It is probably more productive to ask why a hymn to the soma carts is found in this Yama cycle (X.10–19), positioned right before the funeral hymns, especially X.14 dedicated to Yama. First, remember that the Atharvaveda repetitions of the first four verses of this hymn are found in the collection of funeral verses, so to the compilers of the Atharvaveda they must have seemed appropriate to a funeral context. Note, moreover, that the carts themselves are called "twins" (*yamé*) in verse 2, paired with verse 4 around the omphalos verse 3; "twins" of course calls to mind the twin couple Yama and Yamī. The pairing of the two carts also reminds us of the two divergent paths, one leading to the gods (*devayā́na*), one to the ancestors or forefathers (*pitṛyā́na*); the latter is the one that the dead follow to the world where Yama presides. This journey is a particular preoccupation of the funeral hymns, and the conflation of the twin (*yamé*) soma carts with the twin paths, one of which leads to Yama, may explain how the soma carts ended up in the Yama collection.

The final verse brings the hymn full circle, but with a series of tricks embedded in it. On the surface the last half of the verse returns to the ritual situation and the soma carts, which take their places (*yatete*) with the same phraseology as verse 2 (*yátamāne*). They rule over and thrive on "it" of both kinds, most likely a reference to both pure and mixed soma (cf., e.g., VIII.101.10). But the lack of explicit referents for any of the forms of "both," combined with the first half of the verse, which has nothing obvious to do with the carts, invites us to look further. The first half of the verse seems to draw the same contrast as in verse 4 between gods and mortals. While the referent in pāda a is fairly clearly Indra (the epithet "accompanied by the Maruts" being a strong clue), we are inclined to see Yama as the referent in pāda b; he who surrendered his immortality for the sake of offspring is identified as a father in conjunction with sons, in fact the mortals whom he sired after he chose death. We, the poets and sacrificers, are among these sons, and have learned our verbal craft ("have made truth [our] familiar") and produced this poem.

If we are correct in our identification of Yama as the father in 5b, there are several further implications for the structure and contents of this hymn. On the one hand, the father and sons of 5b both recall and contrast with "all the sons of the immortal one" in 1c, for those were the gods. So we have another element of a formal ring structure, but with a different referent. The contrastive pairs Indra/Yama and gods/mortals may also underlie the insistent "both/both kinds" of the second half of verse 5, where (despite the neuter [or feminine] gender of the repeated subject *ubhé* "both") Indra and Yama may be credited with joint rulership (note that Yama is called "king" in the first verse of the next hymn, X.14.1d) and prosperity.

To sum up and indeed to go further, this hymn, and the hymn cycle within which it is embedded, are a reflection of and a reflection on the dualities that define

human existence: mortal and immortal, male and female, heaven and earth, sacred and profane, as we pointed out in the introduction to the Yama cycle as a whole. These dualities are neatly conceptually symbolized in the notion of twins, the primal twins Yama and Yamī, and in this hymn also ritually symbolized by the twin soma carts, appropriate both to the sacrifice and to the divergent paths that lead to the gods and the ancestors respectively, thus providing a proper preface to the funeral hymns that follow.

1. I yoke for you two with reverence the age-old sacred formulation. Let the signal-call of the patron go forth afar like a pathway.
   Let all the sons of the immortal one [=gods] listen (to it)—those who inhabit the heavenly domains.
2. When, taking your own places like twins, you came here, the god-seeking descendants of Manu brought you forward.
   Sit here upon your own wide space, as you know it. Become good seats for our drop.
3. I have mounted along the five steps of the mount, and I go along following the four-footed (track/verse/speech) according to commandment.
   With (just) a syllable I make a counterpart to it [=Speech?]. Upon the navel of truth I purify (it) completely.
4. For the sake of the gods he chose death and for the sake of offspring he did not choose immortality.
   They [=gods] made Bṛhaspati, the seer, into their sacrifice. Yama left behind his own dear body (as offspring).
5. The seven (rivers?) flow for the child accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra]. For their father [=Yama?] have the sons made truth their familiar.
   Both (carts) rule over it [=soma?] of both kinds. Both take their places, and thrive on the one of both kinds.

X.14 (840) Yama, etc.

Yama Vaivasvata
16 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 13–14, 16 and bṛhatī 15

This is the first of the funeral hymns, and it is dedicated for the most part to Yama, the first to die and the king of the world of the dead, where the forefathers dwell and to which a newly dead person makes his way along the *pitṛyā́na* or "way of the forefathers." Because he was the first to die, Yama discovered this path and blazed the trail, as it were, to the pleasant, well-watered (vs. 9) pasture-land (vs. 2).

The hymn falls into three parts. Verses 1–6 offer praise to Yama as the pathfinder to the ancestral world (vss. 1–2) and then invite him to attend our sacrifice along

with others, both gods and ancestors—suggesting implicitly that the *pitṛyā́na* is a two-way street. It is also noteworthy that, though the gods and the forefathers respond to slightly different variants of the ritual cry (vs. 3: *svā́hā* for the gods versus *svadhā́* for the forefathers), the mechanisms for the sacrifice to gods and forefathers are presented as more or less identical in this section and in verses 13–16, and in particular Yama is offered soma. See also the next hymn, X.15.

Verses 7–12 concern not this age-old death but a recent one. A newly dead man is addressed and urged to follow the same path, to join Yama and the ancestors in highest heaven and even to reunite with the body from which he has been temporarily separated (vss. 7–8). Potential troublemakers along the way are dismissed (vs. 9), and the dead man is escorted by the two formidable guardian dogs of Yama (vss. 10–12).

The last four verses (13–16) are in dimeter meter (save for 15c), instead of the triṣṭubh of the rest of the hymn. The first three are simple exhortations to perform sacrifice to Yama; the final verse (16) is by contrast quite opaque, with some of the typical marks of obscurity: unidentified referents (pādas a and b), numerology (pāda b), and manipulation of names of meters (pāda c). In particular, pāda b presents us with six broad feminine entities and one lofty neuter one. (The contrasting grammatical genders so obvious in the Sanskrit are not easily rendered in translation.) The six broad feminines are generally considered to be worlds or realms (on the basis of VI.47.3, which, however, doesn't have an overt referent either), and the lofty neuter some other superior type of space. Given the extreme uncertainty of the referents, the syntax (should pāda b be construed with pāda a, or with cd, or, as we have done, connected neither to what precedes nor what follows?), and the reason for the presence of this verse as the finale of this hymn, we have chosen to leave the meaning open.

1. To the one who has departed along the great slopes, having spied out the path for many,
   son of Vivasvant, unifier of the peoples—to Yama the king show favor with oblation.
2. Yama first found the way for us: this pasture-land is not to be taken away.
   (The way) on which our ancient forefathers departed, along that (do) those who have since been born (follow) along their own paths.
3. Mātalī having been strengthened along with the poets, Yama with the Aṅgirases, Bṛhaspati with the versifiers,
   both those whom the gods strengthen and who strengthen the gods—the ones [=gods] become exhilarated on (the cry) "*svāhā*," the others [=forefathers] on "*svadhā*."
4. This strewn grass here, Yama—just sit here on it, in concord with the Aṅgirases, our forefathers.
   Let mantras pronounced by poets convey you hither. Become exhilarated on this oblation, o king.

5. With the Aṅgirases, deserving of the sacrifice, come hither; Yama, become exhilarated here along with the Vairūpas—
I call upon Vivasvant, who is your father—once having sat down at this sacrifice, on this ritual grass here.
6. The Aṅgirases, our forefathers, the Navagvas, the Atharvaṇas, the Bhṛgus deserving of soma—
may we be in the favor of these who are deserving of the sacrifice; may we be also in their propitious benevolence.

7. Go forth, go forth along the ancient paths on which our ancient forefathers departed.
You will see both kings becoming exhilarated on the *svadhā*(-cry), Yama and Varuṇa the god.
8. Unite with the forefathers, unite with Yama, with what has been sacrificed and bestowed, in the highest distant heaven.
Having left behind imperfection, come home again. Unite with your body in your full luster.
9. (You all)—go away, go apart, and slink away from here. It is for him that the forefathers made this world.
A resting place anointed with waters through the days and nights Yama gives to him.
10. Outrun the two dogs of Saramā's breed, four-eyed and brindled, along the path that leads straight to the goal.
Then approach the forefathers who are good to find, who reach exhilaration in joint revelry with Yama.
11. Your two dogs, Yama, who are guardians, four-eyed guards of the path with their eyes on men—
to them deliver him, o king. Provide for him well-being and freedom from disease.
12. The two broad-nosed, reddish-brown messengers of Yama, stealers of lives, pursue the peoples.
Let these two here today grant a fortunate life again to us, to see the sun.

13. For Yama press the soma; for Yama pour the oblation.
To Yama goes the sacrifice, properly prepared, with Agni as messenger.
14. For Yama pour the ghee-rich oblation and set it forth.
He will guide us to the gods, for us to live for a long lifetime.
15. For Yama the king pour the most honeyed oblation.
Here is homage to the seers born of old, to the age-old makers of the path.
16. He flies with the Trikadrukas. Six are broad, but just one is lofty.
The triṣṭubh, the gāyatrī, the meters—all these are established in Yama.

X.15 (841) Pitars

Śaṅkha Yāmāyana
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 11

This hymn is simply an expansion on the invitation in the last hymn (X.14.4–6) to the forefathers to come to our sacrifice. They are repeatedly urged to sit on the ritual grass, to partake of the offerings, including soma, and to provide us with material and spiritual benefits in return. The language is quite straightforward, with very few verbal tricks. Only in verse 3 do we encounter a turn of phrase that invites our inquiry: in the first half of the verse "I" find not only the forefathers on the ritual ground but also "the grandson/child" (*nápāt*) and the "stride of Viṣṇu." The "grandson" may be a reference to Agni, often called "child of strength" (*ū́rjo nápāt*) and also frequently identified with the "Child of the Waters" (Apām Napāt), but it may also and simultaneously refer to the various descendants of the returning forefathers, descendants who would be present at the ritual and serving at it. As for Viṣṇu's wide stride, most commentators take this as the highest heaven, that is, the last of Viṣṇu's three strides. But it is hard to understand how this would be found "here"; we think rather that it refers to Viṣṇu's first stride, which measures out the earth, and in this case that it is a specific reference to the delineated sacrificial space.

Toward the end of the hymn, the god Agni becomes prominent (vss. 9–14) and his special relationship with the forefathers—as their cremation fire—is alluded to (esp. vss. 11, 14).

1. Let the nearer ones rise up, up the further, up those in the middle—the forefathers deserving of soma.
Those who have gone to (their next) life avoiding the wolf, knowing the truth, let those forefathers help us at the invocations.
2. Let this homage here today be for the forefathers—those who went previously, those who went later,
those who are seated here in the earthly realm, or who are now among the clans of good community.
3. I have found here the forefathers good to find and the grandson and the wide stride of Viṣṇu.
Those who, sitting on the ritual grass, share in the pressed soma and the food at (the cry of) "*svadhā*," they are the most welcome arrivals here.
4. You forefathers who sit on the ritual grass inclined this way with your aid, we have made these oblations for you. Enjoy!
Come here with your most luck-bringing help. Then provide for us luck and lifetime without flaw.
5. The forefathers deserving of soma have been summoned here to the dear stores on the ritual grass.
Let them come hither, let them listen (to us) here; let them speak on (our) behalf, let them help us.

6. Having bent your knee, having sat down to the south, greet this sacrifice here—all of you.
   Do not harm us, o forefathers, because of any offense that we may do to you in our human way.
7. Sitting in the lap of the ruddy (Dawns?), provide wealth for the pious mortal.
   To your sons, o forefathers, hold out (a portion) of this good thing. Provide nourishment here.
8. Those ancient forefathers of ours deserving of soma, the Vasiṣṭhas, who journeyed along to the soma-drinking,
   in joint enjoyment with them let Yama—he eager with them eager—eat the oblations according to their desire.
9. Those who have thirsted, panting, among the gods, those knowing the priestly functions, those fashioned by praise along with chants—
   with them, o Agni, drive here, turned this way—with the forefathers who are good to find and truly here, the poets who sit by the gharma drink.
10. Those who are truly here—eating oblations, drinking oblations, taking their place on the same chariot with Indra, with the gods—
    with them, o Agni, drive here—with the thousand god-extolling, further, earlier forefathers, who sit by the gharma-drink.
11. Sweetened by Agni, o forefathers, come here. Sit each on his own seat, you of good guidance.
    Eat the oblations set forth on the ritual grass. Then provide wealth in hale heroes.
12. You, Agni Jātavedas, reverently invoked, have conveyed the oblations, having made them very fragrant.
    You have presented them to the forefathers; they have eaten them at (the cry of) "*svadhā*." (Now) you, o god—eat the oblations set forth.
13. Both the forefathers who are here and those who are not here, both those whom we know and those whom we do not know,
    you know how many they are, o Jātavedas. Through your own powers [/at *svadhā*-calls], enjoy the well-performed sacrifice.
14. Those burned by fire and those not burned by fire who become exhilarated at (the cry of) "*svadhā*" in the middle of heaven,
    along with them (go) as sovereign king (on the way) leading to (the other) life. Arrange your body as you wish.

X.16 (842) Agni

Damana Yāmāyana
24 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 11–14

The focus on the cremation fire in the last part of the preceding hymn (X.15) is enlarged upon here. This fire is seen both as a blessed release of the dead man to the realm of the ancestors and as a menace to the vulnerable dead body. This ambivalence is clearly on display in the first verse, where the fire is begged not to burn up the body, but, on the other hand, to make the dead man "cooked" and ready to go to the forefathers. The same sentiment is repeated in verse 2, and the journey undertaken. The dead body itself is addressed in verse 3, with its parts consigned to the corresponding cosmic entities. Two more verses to Agni follow (4–5), continuing the themes of verses 1–2. In verses 6–7 the body is addressed again: in verse 6 it is reassured that the physical indignities it has undergone since death will be fixed by the cremation fire and by soma, but in verse 7 it is urged to protect itself against the same fire. The cremation seems to end with verse 8.

With the cremation concluded, the next verses (9–12) treat the inauspicious but powerful cremation fire and the means to render it harmless and to reintegrate it into the generally auspicious sphere of fire. The "flesh-eating fire" is first explicitly distinguished from "the other" fire, the ritual fire that receives the oblations to the gods, and the flesh-eating fire is assigned the task of taking the sacrifice to the ancestors and bringing them to the sacrifice here. Since this task is parallel to that of the other fire, the gods' ritual mediator, the negative aspects of the flesh-eating fire can be set aside, and it can be conceptually reconfigured as a positive force, a transformation completed in verse 12.

In the final two verses (13–14) the place where the cremation took place returns to nature, with the fire extinguished and plants growing again. The import of the final apostrophe to a cool and chilly feminine entity is clear, even though the referent (a water plant?) is not.

1. Don't burn him through, Agni; don't scorch him; don't singe his skin, nor his body.
   When you will make him cooked to readiness, Jātavedas, then impel him forth to the forefathers.
2. When you will have made him cooked to readiness, Jātavedas, then deliver him to the forefathers.
   When he will embark on the (way) leading to (the other) life, then he will lead at the will of the gods.
3. Let your eye go to the sun, your life-breath to the wind. Go to heaven and to earth as is fitting.
   Or go to the waters, if it has been fixed for you there. Take your stand in the plants with your limbs.
4. The goat is your portion. With your heat, heat it up. Let your flame heat it up, let your beam.
   The propitious bodies that are yours, o Jātavedas, with those convey him to the world of good (ritual) performers.
5. Release him again to the forefathers, o Agni—the one who, offered to you, proceeds by his own powers.
   Clothing himself in life, let him go in pursuit of his remains: let him unite with his body, o Jātavedas.

6. What of yours the black omen-bird pecked at, or the ant, the serpent, or the dog-footed (beast),
   let omnivorous Agni make it free from curse, and Soma, who has entered the brahmins.
7. Make for yourself an enveloping armor against fire with (the flesh of) cows. Cover yourself entirely with grease and fat,
   lest the bold one, bristling with his flame, fasten himself around you, intending to utterly burn you up.
8. This beaker here, o Agni—don't overturn it. It is dear to the gods and to those deserving of soma [=forefathers]—
   the beaker that is the drinking vessel of the gods—in it the immortal gods find their exhilaration.
9. Flesh-eating Agni I send off in the distance. Carrying away defilements, let him go to those who have Yama as king.
   Here let only this one, the other Jātavedas, carry the oblations to the gods, knowing what's ahead.
10. The flesh-eating Agni who entered your house, though he saw this one here, the other Jātavedas—
    that god I take for the sacrifice to the forefathers. He will send the gharma (drink) to the highest seat.
11. The flesh-conveying Agni who will sacrifice to the forefathers, who are strong through truth,
    he will proclaim the oblations to the gods and the forefathers.
12. Eagerly we would install you; eagerly we would kindle you.
    Eagerly convey the eager forefathers here, to eat the oblation.
13. The one whom you have entirely burnt, Agni, that one extinguish in turn.
    Let the *kiyāmbu* plant grow here and the *pākadūrvā* and the *vyalkaśā*.
14. O cool lady full of cooling, chilly lady full of chill,
    join together with the lady frog—stimulate this fire here.

X.17 (843) Various Divinities: Saraṇyū (1–2), Pūṣan (3–6), Sarasvatī (7–9), the Waters (10, 14), the Waters or Soma (11–13)

Devaśravas Yāmāyana

14 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh or purastādbṛhatī 13, anuṣṭubh 14

This hymn consists of a disparate collection of segments, which do not seem to form a coherent whole and which do not always have an obvious connection to the death/funeral context of this cycle of hymns.

The first two enigmatic verses may well be the most discussed of all Ṛgvedic mythological sketches, although this wide-ranging and ongoing discussion has not brought as much clarity as could be desired. The verses provide us with a skeletal

three-generation mythological family tree, with a father, the god Tvaṣṭar, and his daughter, who is identified as both mother of Yama and wife of Vivasvant. All this is fairly clearly set out in the first verse: it opens with a Svayaṃvara ("self-choice marriage") invitation issued by the father for his daughter, to which the whole world responds (1ab), and the second half (1cd) appears to summarize the results of that marriage—the husband chosen apparently being Vivasvant, and the child issuing from the marriage apparently being Yama. (It should be noted, though, that the identity of Tvaṣṭar's daughter [1a] with the mother of Yama [1c] and wife of Vivasvant [1d] is only implicit from context, not expressly stated, and her name is not given in vs. 1.) The only disquieting part of this verse comes with the last word: "she disappeared" (*nanāśa*). This word sets the stage for its companion verse.

The second verse considerably muddies the clean lines of our initial family tree. It turns out that the vanished woman of verse 1 was actually hidden away (2a) by an unnamed set of individuals—perhaps the gods, who create and pass off on (the unsuspecting?) Vivasvant a simulacrum of his wife (2b). In the second half of the verse the neat maternal line of 1c is likewise made obscure: someone (the original woman? the simulacrum?) bears the Aśvins (2c), and she (or the other female) leaves behind (abandons? leaves as a legacy?) two unnamed paired ones (2d). Yama, the son in 1c, is not mentioned by name, but he may lurk as part of the two in 2d (Yama and Yamī? Yama and Manu?), who could on the other hand be the aforementioned Aśvins. Each of these possibilities has had its scholarly champions (and it has in fact also been argued that 2d refers to *two* pairs, that is four in all). The last word of verse 2 is the feminine name Saraṇyū (lit., "hastening"), seeming to identify our protagonist, but the name provides little help, and could, in principle, belong to either the original or the duplicate woman.

All in all, the two verses seem deliberately and cleverly designed to mislead and confuse, and in that they have admirably succeeded, beginning with the retellings of the story in the later Vedic tradition and continuing to this day. The myth has also often been invoked in a comparative Indo-European context. (For a recent discussion of the history of scholarship and for his own Indo-European interpretation, see Jackson 2006: Part II: esp. 72–93.) This is not the place to produce a full treatment of the myth behind the verses or its various interpretations; suffice it to say that we are inclined to see the paired two in 2d as Yama and Yamī, in part because a connection with Yama's history is the only way to make sense of the inclusion of these verses here.

The relevance of the next set of verses (4–6), to Pūṣan, is considerably clearer. Pūṣan as the good guide and finder of lost livestock makes an excellent psychopomp, leading the dead along the dangerous path to the next world.

The goddess, and river, Sarasvatī is addressed in the next three verses (7–9), with a final verse (10) to the Waters in general. Sarasvatī here seems especially connected with the dead forefathers and the offerings to them at the ritual (esp. vss. 8–9); this may be an early foreshadowing of the later ritual offering of water to the dead, or, as verse 10 suggests, connected with the general purificatory power of waters (see X.9.6–9 earlier in this maṇḍala).

Verses 10–13 concern the "drop" (*drapsá*) and are addressed in the 2nd person to Soma, who is never named but clearly identifiable from his characteristic vocabulary. There is no mention of the forefathers or of anything related to a funeral, and there is no obvious reason why these verses should have been attached to this hymn. Indeed, the final purificatory verse (14) would follow better directly on verse 10.

1. "Tvaṣṭar is arranging a wedding for his daughter": (on hearing) thus, all this world comes together.
   The mother of Yama, the wife of great Vivasvant, while being conveyed around (on her wedding journey), went missing.
2. They hid her away, the immortal, from the mortals. Having made a female of the same appearance, they gave her to Vivasvant.
   And she was carrying the Aśvins (in the womb), as it happened, and she left behind the two, the paired ones [=Yama and Yamī?]—Saraṇyū.

3. Let Pūṣan stir you forth from here—the wise one, whose livestock doesn't get lost, the herdsman of the world.
   He will deliver you to these forefathers; Agni (will deliver you) to the gods who are good to find.
4. Āyu ("Lifetime") having a complete lifetime will protect you all around. Let Pūṣan protect you from in front on the path forward.
   Where those of good action sit, where they have gone, there let god Savitar place you.
5. Pūṣan knows all these regions through and through: he will lead us along the least perilous (way).
   Granting well-being, the glowing one, possessing hale heroes—not keeping distant, let him go in front, foreknowing.
6. On the forward path of paths was Pūṣan born, on the forward path of heaven, on the forward path of earth.
   He wanders back and forth to both the dearest seats, foreknowing.

7. Sarasvatī do those seeking the gods invoke, Sarasvatī when the ceremony is being extended.
   Sarasvatī did those of good action invoke. Sarasvatī will give a thing of value to the pious.
8. O Sarasvatī, you who drove on the same chariot with the forefathers, becoming exhilarated at the *svadhā*(-calls), o goddess—
   having taken your seat here on this ritual grass, bring yourself to exhilaration. Provide us refreshments that bring no disease.
9. Sarasvatī, whom the forefathers invoke, as they arrive at the sacrifice in the south—
   provide here a portion of refreshment worth thousands and thriving of wealth among the sacrificers.

10. Let the waters, the mothers cleanse us; let them, ghee-pure, purify us with their ghee,
    for the goddesses carry forth every defilement. I rise up from them gleaming, purified.

11. The drop spurted through the first days, both through this womb here and the former one.
    I offer the drop circling around through the same womb, according to the seven priestly functions.
12. Your drop that spurts and your plant that is set in motion by the arms, from the lap of the Holy Place,
    or from the Adhvaryu or from the filter, that one of yours I offer with my mind when the *vaṣaṭ*-cry is made.
13. Your drop that has spurted, your plant, and what is below and what beyond the ladle—
    let this god Bṛhaspati pour it all together for benefit.

14. Full of milk are the plants, full of milk my little speech.
    Full of milk indeed is the milk of the waters. With it cleanse me altogether.

X.18 (844) Death, etc.

Saṃkusuka Yāmāyana
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except 11 prastārapaṅkti, 13 jagatī, 14 anuṣṭubh

This lovely hymn falls into several sections, each treating the end of the funeral service. The first six verses depict the mourners leaving the service and returning to their lives. Death is dismissed in verse 1, and in verses 2–3 the living turn back to an enhanced life, full of "dancing and laughter" (vs. 3). They are separated from death by a barrier (vs. 4); in the later ritual a stone is set down near the grave. Verses 5–6 are especially concerned with the orderly sequence of life and death, in particular the fear that the younger will die before their elders and disrupt the proper sequence (see esp. 5cd).

The next three verses (7–9) have been much discussed, especially in the context of "suttee" (*satī*) or widow-burning, though the verses are emphatically not a depiction thereof. From verse 8 it appears that the widow lies down, temporarily, beside her dead husband, but is summoned back to life and indeed symbolically reborn to become the wife of a new husband (quite possibly her brother-in-law, in levirate marriage). The happy women in verse 7 apparently approach the funeral pyre to adorn the widow for her return to life. A similar "return to life" is granted the dead man's bow in verse 9, where someone, quite possibly the dead man's son, repossesses the bow to put it to future use.

The burial is the subject of verses 10–13, with an emphasis on the softness and gentleness of the welcoming earth, both mother and bride, which lies lightly on the dead man. Verse 13 forms a sort of ring with verse 1, with both expressing a prohibition against harm with the same construction and the same root √*riṣ* (1d *mā́... rīriṣaḥ*, 13b *mā́... riṣam*). This ring defines the final verse (14) as outside the hymn proper, and other indications support this extra-hymnic status. It is in dimeter meter, instead of the trimeter that prevails elsewhere, and the Aśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra, which treats the ritual usage of all the other verses, ignores it, as does the medieval commentator Sāyaṇa. The sense of this verse is also much disputed. Many scholars think that the poet is predicting his own future death, on a day that is approaching him, in the first hemistich, and in the second he restrains his speech in anticipation. (As Geldner says, rather more dramatically than usual, "der Rest ist Schweigen" [the rest is silence].) In contrast, we consider this to belong to the typical genre of hymn-final meta-poetic verses, in which the poet comments on his own skill in producing the poem that precedes. By this interpretation, the first half-verse concerns the well-conducted funeral that has just taken place, while the second refers specifically to the poet's taming and controlling the speech that accompanied that ritual.

1. Depart, Death, along the further path, which is your own, different from the one leading to the gods.
   To you who possess eyes and who listen do I speak: do not harm our offspring nor our heroes.
2. Effacing the footprint of death when you have gone, establishing for yourselves a longer, more extended lifetime,
   swelling up with offspring and wealth, become cleansed and purified, o you who are worthy of the sacrifice.
3. These the living have turned aside from the dead. The invocation of the gods has become favorable for us today.
   We have gone facing forward to dancing, to laughter, establishing for ourselves a longer, more extended lifetime.
4. I set down this barrier here for the living. Let no one of these later go to this goal.
   Let them live for a hundred ample autumns. Let them conceal death with a mountain.
5. Just as the days follow each upon the last, just as the seasons follow straightaway upon the seasons,
   so, o Ordainer, arrange their lifetimes, so that the later does not leave behind the earlier.
6. Mount your lifetime, choosing old age, taking your place each following the last, as many as you are.
   Here will Tvaṣṭar, affording good birth, in concert (with the Wives of the Gods), make a long lifetime for you to live.

7. These women here, non-widows with good husbands—let them, with fresh butter as ointment, approach together.
   Without tears, without afflictions, well-jeweled, let the wives first mount the womb.
8. "Arise, woman, to the world of the living. You lie beside him whose life is gone. Come here!
   You have come into existence now as wife of a husband who has grasped your hand and wishes to have you."
9. Taking the bow from the hand of the dead for our dominion, luster, and strength,
   you there and we here—may we with good heroes win all contests and hostile engagements.
10. Creep upon this mother earth, the broad earth of wide expanse, who is very kindly.
    The young girl, soft as wool for the one who gives priestly gifts—let her protect you from the lap of Dissolution.
11. Arch up, Earth; do not press down. Become easy to approach for him, easy to curl up in.
    Like a mother her son with her hem, cover him, Earth.
12. Let the earth stay arching up. For let a thousand (house)posts be fixed in (her).
    Let the house be dripping with ghee. Let it always be sheltering to him there.
13. I prop up the earth from you. Setting down this earth clod here, let me not be harmed.
    Let the forefathers uphold this pillar for you. There let Yama fix your seats.
14. On the day facing me [=today] they have set (him=dead man) down like a feather from an arrow.
    The speech facing me I have grasped, like a horse by its halter.

X.19 (845) Cows

Mathita Yāmāyana or Bhṛgu Vāruṇi or Cyavana Bhārgava
8 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 6

This simple, repetitive, but charming call to the cows to come home is the final hymn of the Yama collection, though its connection to the other hymns in the cycle, especially the funeral hymns that immediately precede it, is unclear. The signature idiom in this hymn is "turn back," and perhaps it was attached to the Yama cycle on thematic grounds, because the first verses of the preceding hymn, X.18, concern the return to life of the living after the funeral of their dead kinsman (see esp. X.18.3).

1. Turn back. Don't keep going. Keep company with us, o rich ones.
   O Agni and Soma, who bring goods back, hold our wealth fast for us.
2. Turn them back again; bring them back here again.
   Let Indra hold them back; let Agni drive them near.
3. Let these turn back again. Let them prosper in (the care of) this man, the lord of the cattle.
   Right here, o Agni, fix them down fast. Here let it remain—our wealth.
4. Also the one who is the cowherd—I call him to the journeying back, the coming back, the bringing to agreement, and the going away,
   to the turning here and the turning back.
5. He who has managed the dispersal, who has managed the going away,
   the turning here, and the turning back—let the cowherd also turn back.
6. You turner back, turn them back here; give the cows to us again, o Indra.
   Let us find enjoyment with them alive.
7. On every side I surround you with nourishment, ghee, and milk.
   Whatever gods there are who are worthy of the sacrifice, let them join us with wealth.
8. You turner back, turn them here; you turner back, turn them back.
   The earth has four quarters: from these, turn them back.

The Anukramaṇī gives a choice of authorship for the next seven hymns, X.20–26: Vimada, the son of Indra or Prajāpati, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra. The patronymic of the latter choice would identify the poet as a son or descendant of Vasukra Aindra, the author of the three desperately difficult hymns that immediately follow (27–29). The poet of X.25.11 also identifies with or identifies himself as Kakṣīvant, the very skilled poet of I.116–126.

Whatever the poet's affiliation, he is fond of unusual meters (see esp. 21, 22, 24, 25) as well as puns on the name Vimada. The hymns are dedicated to Agni (20–21), Indra (22–1st half of 24), the Aśvins (2nd half of 24), Soma (25), and Pūṣan (26).

X.20 (846) Agni

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
10 verses: gāyatrī, except ekapadāvirāj 1, anuṣṭubh 2, virāj 9, triṣṭubh 10

This first of the Vimada hymns starts with a single-pāda verse adapted from the first verse of X.25 and placed here to provide an auspicious beginning for the series. The second verse has a similarly marked beginning: its first two words are identical to the first words of the Ṛgveda, I.1.1 *agním īḷe* "I invoke Agni...." The hymn mostly treats the familiar topic of the physical presence of the ritual fire, though with some striking imagery and turns of phrase. The fire's expansion upward, even to heaven, is the subject of the middle verses (4–6), with his expansion opening the way also for mortals and for gods. In the final summary verse (10) the poet Vimada names himself.

1. Make auspicious thought our familiar.
2. Agni do I invoke, the youngest, for delights, an ally [/Mitra] difficult to restrain by reason of his (own) command,
   upon whose foundation the mottled (cows) [=flames] honor the sun (as well as) the udder of their mother [=fireplace].
3. With his (own) body as his nest, his radiant beam his beacon, him whom they make increase with their mouth,
   he flashes—his teeth [=flames] in a row.
4. The way for the stranger and the clans goes onward, since he [=Agni] has reached the ends of heaven—
   as the bright-shining poet, (but also as) a cloud.
5. He takes pleasure in the oblations of the son of Manu. The craftsman stands erect at the sacrifice.
   Fixing his seat, he goes in front.
6. For he is peaceful dwelling, oblation, and sacrifice. By harkening only to him, their way goes onward:
   the gods (go) to Agni, who is equipped with axes [=flames].
7. I seek Agni, who dominates through sacrifice, and the friendship of (that) kindly ancient.
   They say that Āyu [=Agni] is the son of the stone.
8. Whichever superior men are from among us, they should all be "in the money"
   when they make Agni increase with their oblation.
9. Black, white, and red is his course; coppery, silver, and ruddy is glorious (Agni).
   The begetter has begotten him of golden form.
10. In just this way, o Agni, child of nourishment, Vimada, in company with the immortals, will convey to you his inspired thought
    and his songs, as he implores your good favors. Refreshment, nourishment, a good dwelling—all that have you brought.

X.21 (848) Agni

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
8 verses: āstārapaṅkti

This hymn is notable for two related formal features, its meter and its refrain. The meter āstārapaṅkti (8 8 / 8 4 8 4) is limited to this group of hymns attributed to Vimada, providing the meter for the two hymns X.21 and X.25 and the first half (vss. 1–3) of X.24. (The Anukramaṇī identifies the meter of the single verse X.170.4

as āstārapaṅkti, but the characteristic 8 4 8 4 sequence must be read as 12 12 there.) In all the Vimada occurrences the two four-syllable pādas form a grammatically unified refrain (the same refrain in all three hymns), interrupted by an eight-syllable pāda semantically and syntactically integrated into the rest of the verse: *ví vo máde* x x x x x x x x *vívakṣase* "In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods)." The first four-syllable pāda of the refrain is also a pun on the poet's name: *ví vo máde*, literally "in exhilaration you...," but also "Vi...mada" (itself interrupted by the enclitic pronoun *vaḥ*). Although the effect is striking and insistent, it is also impossible to render in translation, and so the refrain has been unified and placed at the end of the verse. To illustrate the difficulties of a literal translation, we will give a rendering of the first verse in this hymn in that style:

> As if with (hymns) with their own twists, we choose you, Agni, as Hotar
> for our sacrifice whose ritual grass has been strewn—in exhilaration you (gods)—
> (we choose you,) sharp and pure-flamed—I wish to acclaim.

The formal novelty of the hymn is not matched by its content, which is simply a typical celebration of Agni's installation as Hotar at his kindling, along with wishes for his gifts of wealth.

1. As if with (hymns) with their own twists, we choose you, Agni, as Hotar
   for our sacrifice whose ritual grass has been strewn, (you,) sharp and pure-flamed.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
2. They beautify you—those close at hand who receive bounty in horses [=priests].
   The pouring(-ladle) pursues you, o Agni, as does the oblation whose course is straight.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
3. Those having (you) as their foundation [=flames] sit upon you, "pouring" with their tongues like women pouring with their ladles.
   Black and silver forms and all beauties do you put on.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
4. Whatever wealth you hold in regard, o Agni, you overpowering immortal,
   bring that here for us to win the prize, the bright (wealth) here to the sacrifices.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
5. When just born, Agni found all the poetic arts with (the aid of) the Atharvan (priest).
   He became the messenger of Vivasvant, dear and desirable to Yama.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

6. They invoke you at the sacrifices, o Agni, while the ceremony is proceeding.
   You provide all desirable goods to the pious man.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
7. They have installed you as the beloved priest at the sacrifices, o Agni, ghee-faced and blazing for Manu, most observant with your eyes.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
8. O Agni, with your blazing flame you spread yourself wide and lofty.
   Roaring, you act the bull; you set an embryo in your female kinsfolk [=plants].
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

X.22 (848) Indra

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
15 verses: purastādbṛhatī, except anuṣṭubh 5, 7, 9, triṣṭubh 15

The metrical scheme of this hymn is unique in the Ṛgveda (see Oldenberg 1888: 122); most of the verses have an 11 8 8 8 configuration (or something approaching it), despite the Anukramaṇī's identifications. Like many hymns whose meter is irregular, this one is driven more by phraseology, verbal echoes, and lexical chaining than by meter. The responsion and chaining begin with the first two verses, which consist of a rhetorical question about Indra's fame (vs. 1) and its answer (vs. 2).

The general praises of Indra continue in the next two verses, but shade, in verse 4, into the myth (or fragments of myth) that occupy most of the rest of the hymn: the journey of Indra and his client Kutsa (unnamed here) to the house of Uśanā (Kāvya) with the horses of the Wind (vss. 4–6), the plea to Indra to smite the demon Śuṣṇa (7–9), and the actual slaying of Śuṣṇa and its aftermath (vss. 10–11, 14), with several verses interspersed (12–13) begging Indra for aid and comfort. (These may belong to the Śuṣṇa saga and represent the speech of the same "we" who asked Indra to kill the demon in vss. 7–9, but they can also be generalized to the current "we" of singers and patrons.)

Although there are many puzzles in these mythological verses, the real crux is the pair concerning (apparently) the slaying of Śuṣṇa, verses 10–11, which contain several well-nigh-impenetrable hapaxes and whose syntax is in places unparsable. Verse 10, especially, may be deemed impossible, and its translation is therefore provisional and differs radically from others' interpretations. We believe that it contains a badly remembered and garbled allusion to an inherited Indo-Iranian mythic complex. The hapax *kārpāṇé*, which others interpret as "in the sword-combat" (relating it to a much later attested word *kṛpāṇa* "sword"), we connect with the Avestan word *karapan* (read disyllabically in the Gāthās), the designation of a person or persons hostile to the Mazdayasnian religion and associated with equally hostile *kauuis*

(e.g., Yasna 44.20, Yasna 32.12, 14–15, Yasna 46.11)—just as our *kārpāṇé* occurs in a verse with unidentified (and, as it happens, syntactically untethered) *kavís*. In the topsy-turvy religious system of the Gāthās, of course, entities viewed positively in the Ṛgveda (like *kavís*) have negative valuation. This is not the place to explore this hypothesis in detail, but for another apparent manifestation of this myth, see X.99.9, and for further discussion see Jamison (2009d [2013]).

The hymn ends with an impeccable triṣṭubh verse (15), containing a conventional invitation to Indra to drink the soma and conventional wishes for his good will and patronage.

1. Where is Indra famous? Among what people is he famed today like an ally among the people?—
   he who, whether in the dwelling place of the seers or in concealment, is constantly celebrated in song.
2. Here is Indra famed. Among us today he is praised as the wielder of the mace, equal to song—
   he who like an ally among the peoples has made glory for himself among the peoples, not by halves;
3. He who is the lord of great strength, not by halves, and of great manliness, the thruster,
   the bearer of the bold mace, like a father (of) his dear son.
4. As the one having yoked the two boisterous horses of the Wind, as god (having yoked those) of the god, o wielder of the mace,
   as the one who streams along the radiant path when set loose along the highways, he is praised.
5. You have come to just these two horses of the Wind, the silvery ones, to drive them by yourself,
   those for which no god nor mortal can be found as controller.
6. Then Uśanā asks you both [=Indra and Kutsa] on your coming, "With what purpose (have you come) to our house?
   You have come from afar, from heaven and earth, to a mortal."
7. You will ask for us, for our upraised sacred formulation, Indra.
   We (in return) beg you for this help, that you smite Śuṣṇa, the non-man.
8. The Dasyu of non-deeds, of non-thought, the non-man whose commandments are other, is against us.
   You smasher of non-allies, humble the weapon of this Dāsa.
9. (Be there) for us, Indra, o champion, with champions, and (let us be) aided by you, by your power.
   In many places offerings bellow to you in competition like battle cries.
10. You incited these excellent men at the obstacle-smiting for the Karpan [?], you mace-wielding champion,
    when (you found?) him [=Śuṣṇa] in hiding—the sage poets (being there), (profiting from) *the strength of your lordly power, *like the clans.

11. Right away these things (became) yours, Indra, on gaining control over (his) property for giving, you mace-wielding champion,
    when with your fellow travelers you humbled everything born of Śuṣṇa.
12. Let your good superior powers not go nowhere for us, champion Indra.
    May each one of us be in the favor of these (powers) of yours, mace-wielder.
13. For us let these (gifts?) of yours (become) real. They bring no injury—your caresses,
    whose benefits, like those of milk-cows, we would know, mace-wielder.
14. While, handless and footless, the earth grew strong through the powers of her wise ways,
    you, circling him with respectful circumambulation [=as if for the animal sacrifice], jabbed down Śuṣṇa for the whole of life.
15. Drink, drink the soma, hero Indra! Don't mean (us) harm, goods lord, since you are good.
    And protect the singers and the bounteous (patrons), and make us rich from (your?) great wealth.

X.23 (849) Indra

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 1, 7; abhisāriṇī 5 (so Anukramaṇī)

The hymn begins with a fine Indo-Iranian opening "we sacrifice to/worship (*yájāmahe*) Indra," reminiscent of the Younger Avestan litanies with the identical verb *yazamaide*. The praise of Indra that follows is fairly conventional; we hear of his mace (vss. 1, 3), his pair of fallow bays (vss. 1–3), and, less usually, his beard (vss. 1, 3). He is portrayed, in contrastive but complementary fashion, as at once warrior and generous and paternal patron (see, e.g., vss. 1d, 2b, 5).

The final two verses (6–7) mention the poet Vimada (7b) and his family (6a), and both verses feature prominently the verb *vidmā́* "we know," a partial anagram of this name. Indra's name is also played upon, in the adjective *inā́* "strong" (6c), and possibly, earlier in the hymn, by the presence of several pleonastic occurrences of the particle *íd* (3a, 4d). In the same spirit, the frequent occurrence of the preverb/particle *ví* seems designed to recall the Vimada name. This punning is more subtle and varied than that found in the Vimada hymns with the repeated catchword refrain *ví vo máde… vívakṣase* (X.21, 24.1–3, 25). Thus, though the contents of the praise are conventional, the playful phonological complexity gives texture to the poem.

1. We sacrifice to Indra with the mace in his right hand, the charioteer of the fallow bays who follow separate commandments.
   He stands erect, constantly shaking out his beard, while apportioning (goods) by virtue of his weapons, by virtue of his generosity.

2. His are the two fallow bays and the goods [=soma] to be found in the wood(en cup). Indra, the smiter of Vṛtra, shall be bounteous with his bounties.
   As Ṛbhu, Vāja, Ṛbhukṣa [=the three Ṛbhus] he masters his strength, (saying,) "I whet down even the name of the Dāsa."
3. When (he takes?) the golden mace, then he mounts the chariot, which his two fallow bays draw, along with the patrons—
   the bounteous one famed of old, Indra, master of the prize of long(-lasting) fame.
4. Even now, as rain he (sprinkles) all things belonging to his herd; Indra sprinkles his tawny beard.
   He pursues his track down to the honey having its lovely dwelling in the pressed soma. He tosses (his beard) upward like the wind a tree.
5. He who smote with his speech those of disputatious speech, those of insulting speech, and many thousands of the hostile,
   this and every (other) masculine deed of his do we sing—he who, like a father (his son), has strengthened his own force and strength.
6. The Vimadas have begotten this praise for you, Indra, (praise) unprecedented, best of many, for the one of good gifts [/drops],
   for we know the feeding of him, which is that of a strong one. May we bring him close like cowherds their livestock.
7. Let no one keep us away from this fellowship between you, Indra, and Vimada the seer,
   for we know your (fatherly) solicitude, o god, like that of kin. Let there be friendly fellowship of you for us.

X.24 (850) Indra (1–3), the Aśvins (4–6)

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
6 verses: āstārapaṅkti 1–3, anuṣṭubh 4–6

Two separate short hymns, distinguished by divinity, meter, contents, and style. The first three verses, to Indra, contain the Vimada refrain. (For a discussion of its structure see the introduction to X.21.) The poet straightforwardly asks for goods and aid from the god in return for the soma offered to him.

The second three verses, to the Aśvins, allude to an otherwise unknown or little-known myth in which these gods churn out a pair of females (which may or may not be magical fire-churning sticks), which fly away to the gods' disappointment; the gods ask the Aśvins to return them (vss. 4–5). If we knew the myth, it would no doubt be fascinating, but in the absence of further textual evidence, it must remain a tantalizing fragment.

1. O Indra, drink this honeyed soma pressed in the cup;
   lay down for us a foundation of wealth in thousands, o you of many goods.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
2. We beseech you with sacrifices, recitations, and oblations:
   o power-lord of power, set in place for us the best that can be chosen.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
3. You who are the lord of those things to be chosen, the invigorator of the weak,
   and the helper of the praisers, o Indra, protect us from hatred and constraint.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
4. O powerful ones, you two possessing magical powers churned out the two joined (fire-churning sticks?),
   when, reverently invoked by Vimada, you churned, o Nāsatyas.
5. All the gods yearned after the two joined (sticks?) as they flew away.
   The gods said to the Nāsatyas, "Bring (them) back again."
6. Honeyed is my going away and honeyed (my) coming again.
   O gods, do you two make us honeyed by your divinity.

X.25 (851) Soma

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
11 verses: āstārapaṅkti

The only Soma hymn in the Xth Maṇḍala, this hymn, like the others dedicated to Soma outside the IXth Maṇḍala, lacks reference to the ritual preparation of the soma drink, the theme that dominates the IXth Maṇḍala. In fact, there is almost no acknowledgement that soma is a ritual substance at all: just the phrase "the fellowship of the stalk" in verse 1, the identification of Soma as *máda* "exhilarating" in verse 10, and the refrain beginning "in . . . exhilaration" (*ví . . . máde*), itself a pun on the name of the poet Vimada (see introduction to X.21).

The Soma of this hymn is predominately a protector, benevolently forgiving childish transgressions on our part (vs. 3), watching over our possessions and ourselves (vss. 6–7), and guarding us from external threats (vss. 3, 7–10), as well as helping us cultivate our best qualities (vss. 1, 4). This Soma also presides over the distribution of desirable things, probably in the form of the priestly gift or dakṣiṇā. This aspect of Soma is first hinted at in verse 2, developed in verse 5, and triumphantly proclaimed in the final verse, 11.

The hymn contains some curious turns of phrase and slanted imagery, and so the mention of the great Ist Maṇḍala poet Kakṣīvant in verse 10 is not

altogether surprising. It is unclear whether the poet of this hymn is simply claiming Kakṣīvant's mantle or whether there is a family connection or even identity with Kakṣīvant.

The least clear part of the hymn is the second part of the final verse (11), where it is claimed that Soma will help the blind and the halt "for the seven." Soma's aid to the disabled is expressed in similar terms in VIII.79.2, another Soma hymn found outside of IX, but the identity of "the seven" in our verse is disputed, and the poet seems to have wanted to leave it open.

1. Make auspicious thought, skill, and resolve our familiars.
   Then in the fellowship of your stalk (o Soma, we will take pleasure), as cows take pleasure in a pasture.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
2. Touching your heart, they sit amid all your domains, Soma.
   Then these desires of mine spread out, seeking good things.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
3. And I transgress your commandments, Soma, through naïveté.
   So then, like a father to his son offer mercy to us; (guard us) against the fatal weapon.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
4. Our insights go forth together, like torrents into springs.
   Hold our resolve firm like beakers, o Soma, for us to live.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
5. Through the powers that belong to you who are clever and strong, o Soma,
   these insightful ones, avid, open the pen full of cows and horses.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
6. You protect our livestock, Soma, and the moving (world [=living creatures]) dispersed in many places.
   You gather them, for them to live, as you watch over all living beings
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
7. Soma, be our undeceivable herdsman on all sides.
   Ward off failures, o king; let no defamer hold sway over us.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
8. Soma, stay watchful as one of good resolve, to confer vital energy on us.
   As one who knows the territory better than man, protect us from deceit and from difficult straits.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
9. O drop that best smashes obstacles, you are for us Indra's benevolent comrade,
   when they call upon him in the conflict as they do battle at the winning of progeny.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

10. Here he is: the exhilarating, overpowering one dear to Indra grows strong;
    he strengthens the thought of great Kakṣīvant, the inspired poet.
    – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
11. He sends prizes of cows to the inspired poet, to the pious one.
    He, according to his wish, will advance the blind and the halt for the seven.
    – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

X.26 (852) Pūṣan

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
9 verses: anuṣṭubh, except uṣṇih 1, 4

Unlike most treatments of Pūṣan in the Ṛgveda, with their generally simple but lively and colloquial language and concentration on Pūṣan's mundane activities, this hymn is bristling with difficulties, oddly constructed hapax compounds, and high, though frequently unclear, sentiments. See especially verse 6, whose language and intent are almost entirely obscure.

The general themes are Pūṣan's reciprocal relationship with inspired poets and their thoughts (see vss. 1–2, 4–5) and his role as companion and friend (see vss. 2, 5–8).

1. Because our inspired thoughts, the cherished teams, go forth toward (them),
   [/Because their cherished teams go forth toward our inspired thoughts,]
   let the two wondrous ones—(Vāyu,) who possesses a chariot with teams, and mighty Pūṣan—help (them).
2. He [=Pūṣan] to whom belong this greatness, the friendship with the Wind [/sought-after friendship], this people here—
   the inspired poet will strive to win (him) with his hymnic visions. He [=Pūṣan] has taken cognizance of the good praise hymns.
3. He knows the good praise hymns. Pūṣan the bull, like a drop,
   sprinkles sprinklings [?], sprinkles on our enclosure.
4. We would contemplate you. For us, god Pūṣan, (you are)
   both the means to realize our thoughts and to stir up our inspired poets,
5. Half-sharer of sacrifices, horse-driver of chariots,
   seer—he who was established by Manu as the companion who wards off (hatred) for the inspired poet—
6. The husband of her who cares [?] [=Sūryā?], (companion) of the gleaming (female [=Dawn?]) and the gleaming (male [=Agni, Soma, Sun?]),
   weaver of garments of sheep [=wool], always rubbing [=cleaning] the garments.

7. Powerful lord of prizes, powerful companion of prosperities,
the delightful one has shaken forth his beard, shaken it out at will—he who is not to be deceived.
8. O Pūṣan, the goats should turn the pole of your chariot hither—
(you are) the companion of every striving man, born of old, not to be driven away.
9. *Our* chariot let Pūṣan the mighty aid with his vigor.
He will become the increaser of prizes; he will hear this call of ours.

The three hymns ascribed to Vasukra Aindra (X.27–29) are both very rich and very strange, and will repay concentrated study for untold time to come.

X.27 (853) Indra

Vasukra Aindra
24 verses: triṣṭubh

This is one of the most obscure and also one of the most intriguing hymns in the Ṛgveda. In general and in its many particulars it has received a number of competing and conflicting treatments. We will restrict ourselves to presenting our own, often tentative, interpretation, without discussion of other possibilities that have been advanced.

First of all, in our opinion the hymn falls into two complementary units, verses 1–12 and 13–24, with the former subdivided into verses 1–7, 8–10, and 11–12 and the latter into verses 13–18 and 19–24. The overall theme of the whole hymn is the proper reciprocal relationship between men and gods, especially Indra, as symbolized by the sacrifice, and the proper functioning of the cosmos that this mutual relationship ensures. But this theme is treated in distinct ways in the course of the hymn.

The first half is primarily in dialogue between Indra and the singer. In it Indra contrasts the aid he gives to sacrificers with the destruction he metes out to non-sacrificers (vss. 1, 4), and the singer echoes Indra's contrastive pairing by announcing his intention to offer to Indra, as opposed to the self-aggrandizing atheists (vs. 2). Indra is somewhat skeptical of the singer's intent (vs. 3): he suggests that men sacrifice to him only when they need his help (3cd), but after he has helped them win, they forget to offer to him (3ab). Indra continues boasting about his powers (vs. 5), perhaps taken up by the singer (or still in the mouth of Indra himself; vs. 6), promising destruction to non-sacrificers. The singer's glorification of Indra's powers and the devastation he will produce ends this section (vs. 7).

The contrast between followers of Indra and their opposites is continued by another image in the next verses, the metaphor of lost and straying livestock. In verse 8 cows are wandering loose, grazing in the pasture of a stranger, though accompanied by a cowherd. In our view the cows stand for men, turning away from

devotion to "their own lord," Indra, to follow other ways and other leaders. In verse 9 Indra promises to reassemble his lost herd and reestablish proper relationships among them. The first half of verse 10 has the sound of a truth formulation, again announcing the reassembling of the herd, with the second half of the verse expressing the consequences for his weakened enemies, using the striking image of these enemies fighting Indra "with women," a phrase used elsewhere of about-to-be-defeated opponents (V.30.9; cf. I.104.3).

The mention of women in verse 10 may have prompted the coda verses 11–12, which treat the legal issue of the flawed woman given in marriage, known also from the later dharma literature (cf. Mānava Dharma Śāstra IX.72–73, VIII.205, 224). According to Manu a father is culpable if he tries to marry off a physically or mentally flawed girl without declaring her faults in advance, but if he has informed the bridegroom before the marriage, the latter has no legal recourse. Here verse 10 contrasts the suitor of a blind girl who knows she is blind (ab), with one who was tricked into marriage without that knowledge and who therefore has the right to deploy *mení* "the power of thwarted exchange." (For further discussion, see Jamison 1996b.) Verse 12 presents the opposite picture of an unflawed and happy bride, embodying the appropriate and successful functioning of the exchange relations that characterize Ārya society.

Thus, though this first half of X.27 utilizes three dominant images—sacrificers versus non-sacrificers, a unified herd following its herdsman versus dispersed and straying livestock, and a properly contracted marriage versus one that involves fraud and deception—all three contrast proper social relationships with aberrant ones, and warn of the consequences of the latter

The second half of the hymn seems superficially to have nothing to do with what went before, but viewed in the larger context it can be seen to pick up the first and most important image, that of sacrifice as the binding relationship between men and gods, and to develop it. The first six verses of this half (vss. 13–18) deal, in our view, with the creation of the sacrifice and the mystery of its central focus, the fire. This section begins with two riddling verses (13–14) identifying the fire without naming it: verse 13 of the already kindled fire and verse 14 of its creation by the "lofty steed" without shadow or foliage, probably the fire-churning spindle (later *pramantha*), and the mother, probably the lower fire stick (*araṇī*) with a hole in which the spindle is turned and from which the "embryo," the fire itself, emerges. The second half of this verse describes the oblation, conceived of as a cow, "licking the calf (that is, the fire) of another (that is, the fire stick)" when poured into the fire. The creation of the fire is also treated in verse 16, with much of the same lexicon, but with the addition of the ten fingers, which manipulate the fire-making apparatus.

In between is an enigmatic verse (15) about unidentified but numerically precise groups coming from different directions. In our view this treats the original establishment of the sacrifice through the cooperation of various prototypical Ārya communities (perhaps including the Seven Seers, the Navagvas, and the Daśagvas).

This theme is continued, though somewhat enigmatically, in verse 17, but in verse 18 there is schism: two groups go off in opposite directions and follow opposite customs, cooking versus non-cooking. It is the cooks and their fire who are predicted to prevail. With this we return to the stark divisions of the first half of the hymn between sacrificers and non-sacrificers. The split depicted in verse 18 also reminds us of the fuller treatment of sacrificial schism in I.33.4–10.

If the first eighteen verses of this hymn are fiendishly difficult, the last six (19–24) might properly be termed impossible—not so much because of their grammar, but because of the rare words, the obscurity of the references, and the unclarity of the relationships of the verses to each other and to the rest of the hymn. The interpretation that follows is even more tentative than what has preceded. The first two verses of this section (19–20) seem to be riddles turning on astronomical or temporal references. The first may refer to the year and its component parts ("the horde") turning by itself and regularly bringing an end to the mortal generations while renewing itself. The "two oxen of the Pulverizer" (death or old age?) in verse 20 could perhaps be another temporal reference, to night and day as similarly measuring out the lifespan of humans, beneath the eternal world of heaven and the heavenly bodies. This theme appears to be continued in the first half of the next verse (21), though what the "mace" (*vájra*) represents here is entirely unclear—perhaps the year or other temporal division as a weapon that smites mortals. The second half of this verse seems to offer a less bleak picture than the inevitable decay and destruction that temporal divisions bring in their train: there is "other fame," to which old age can lead, though what that fame is or is based on is not stated.

If we are correct, the implicit answer to this question is the sacrifice and its center, fire, and this answer is given obliquely in verse 22. Fire the substance is always potentially present, but not always actually present, and so it appears to defy the temporally defined progress to old age and death. Latent "within every tree," it can burst forth at any time. It is frightening in some of its effects (the flames as "man-eating birds") and strikes terror in all beings (pāda c), but is also the benevolent focus of sacrifice (pāda d). The original establishment of the sacrifice by the gods seems to be treated in verse 23, and in the thoroughly obscure last pāda of that verse Indra, unnamed, may come himself to the sacrifice for epiphany, thus returning us to the beginning of the hymn and the direct involvement of Indra with sacrificers.

The last verse is no clearer than the preceding ones, though it seems to be announcing a final, instructive truth according to which one should lead one's life. Perhaps the idea is that the sacrifice is the means to life, which connects one to the eternal world of heaven and the sun. The destructive temporal forces mentioned earlier (vss. 20–21) were "below the sun," but in this final verse the sun reveals itself, hides the mist (if that's what the phonologically problematic hapax *busá* means), and reaches its "foot" (a sunbeam going toward the ground?) out to be seen, thus providing a potential bond for the sacrificing mortal to the higher world. This shaft of light, liberated from its covering, that ends the hymn, seems an optimistic promise to the addressee of better things than decay and death.

But much of this is poorly supported speculation, and the hymn, especially the final verses of the hymn, invites further detailed investigation.

1. [Indra:] I will really "boil over," singer, when I do my best for the presser, the sacrificer.
But I am a smiter of the one who gives no milk-mixture, who injures the true, who seeks crooked ways—the nullity.
2. [Singer:] When I will drive together for battle those who do not follow the gods, puffing themselves up in their bodies,
at home I will cook you a bulging bull; I will pour down sharp soma fifteen-fold.
3. [Indra:] I do not know anyone who speaks thus, *after* he has smashed the godless ones in the clash.
When he has caught sight of the mettlesome clash, only then do they proclaim two bulls to me (as offering).
4. [Indra:] When I was in communities unknown, they all were bounteous to me, since I was really there.
But truly I despoil the nullity even if he is here at peace, as I destroyed the one on the mountain [=Vṛtra?], having grasped him by the foot.
5. [Indra:] Truly they do not confine me in (just one) community, nor do the mountains (confine me), when I am minded.
(Even) one with a stunted ear will be afraid of my roar. Just so, day after day the dust will stir.
6. [Indra? Singer?:] He will now see those here who drink the cooked (milk oblation) and who serve the foreleg without (offering to) Indra, and those who play the lord's role for an arrow,
or who have scorned their ardent comrade. The wheel-rims should now roll over them!
7. [Singer:] You have come into being, you have grown strong, and you have traversed your lifetime. Now (the opponent) in front will shatter; the one behind will shatter now.
The two covers [=heaven and earth] do not encompass him who has labored on the far shore of this airy realm.
8. [Singer:] The cows, dispersed, ate the grain of the stranger. I saw them roaming with their cowherd.
The cries of the stranger came together from all sides. For how long will their own lord find pleasure in them [=cows]?
9. [Indra:] When I will round up those that eat the grass and grain of the peoples all together in a wide pasture,
then a yoked (animal) will seek an unhitcher, while he who longs to will yoke an unyoked one.

10. [Indra:] And just then you will consider this truly spoken by me—that I shall bring the two-footed and the four-footed together.
Whoever then will fight the bull [=Indra] with women, I, who cannot be combatted, will share out his possessions.

11. (A father) who has a daughter blind from birth—who, knowing her (as) blind, will have designs on her [/will be hostile (to him=the father)]?
(On the other hand, not knowing her state), which of the two will unleash (the power of) violated exchange against him [=the father]—the one who marries her or the one who woos her (on the bridegroom's behalf)?

12. How different is the maiden, gratified all around by an admirable (gift) worthy to be chosen, from a bride-seeking man from among the young bloods?
She becomes a fortunate bride, when she is well adorned. She wins herself an ally [=spouse] in public.

13. He has swallowed (it [=firewood]) from the foot; he eats what's in front of him. He has set out head upon head [=his flames], as his shield.
Sitting, he destroys the (kindling stick) erect in his lap; bending downward, he goes along the upstretching earth.

14. Lofty but without a shadow and without foliage is the steed [=kindling stick]. The mother [=lower fire stick] stands still; unloosed the embryo eats.
Licking the calf of another, she [=oblation] lows. In what form did the milk-cow deposit her udder?

15. Seven heroes [=Seven Seers?] came up from the south, eight from the north: they joined together.
Nine [=Navagvas?] with grain sacks [?] came from the west, ten [=Daśagvas?] in the east traverse the back of the rock.

16. One brownish one [=fire], common to the ten (fingers)—they spur on to decisive resolve.
The mother bears the embryo well-placed in her belly—him seeking after nothing, she being content.

17. The heroes cooked a fat ram; there were dice strewn down for gaming.
Two roam the lofty steppe [=heaven?], provided with filters, purifying (soma?) in the waters.

18. Shrieking, they went apart in opposite directions: one half will cook, for the other half does not cook.
This god Savitar here says this to me, "Only he whose food is wood, whose food is melted butter will win."

19. I saw the horde [=year?] on the move from afar, turning by its own power, without a wheel.
It escorts forward the generations of peoples of the stranger, diminishing their "tails" at the same time as transforming itself ever anew.

20. These two oxen of the Pulverizer [=old age? death?] have been yoked for me. Do not drive (them) forth; wait just an instant.
The waters also come through to the goal of this one, and he has come into being as the Harmer below the sun.

21. This is the mace that has been rolled out in many ways, below the fullness of the lofty sun.
But there exists other fame beyond this. Unwaveringly, old age crosses to it.

22. Held in check within every tree, the cow [=fire?] will bellow. From there the man-eating birds [=flames?] will fly forth.
Then all this creation here will be afraid, though pressing (soma) for Indra and doing its best for the seer.

23. The first of the gods stood still at the measuring (of the sacrificial ground?); the later ones of them came up from the cutting (of it).
Three marshy places [=fire hearths?] heat the earth; the two (horses?) convey the "stammerer" [?] [=Indra?] to the fullness (of the sacrifice? of the sun?).

24. This is your means of life. And know this—don't hide away such a thing in the clash—
when the sun reveals itself, it hides the mist [?]. Its "foot" is released as if from a garment.

X.28 (854) Indra

Vasukra Aindra
12 verse: triṣṭubh

Another devilish hymn by the very talented Vasukra, and a worthy companion-piece to X.27. Like the first half of X.27, this hymn consists of a dialogue between Indra and a singer/sacrificer, introduced in this case by a verse spoken by the sacrificer's wife (who then disappears from the hymn). The hymn is more tightly structured than X.27, and it complements X.27 in another way: though the second half of X.27 is deliberately obscure and esoteric in its expression, X.28 presents itself (however misleadingly) as instruction to the simple, couched in straightforward language.

The topic of the hymn, to be reductionist, is successful and unsuccessful sacrifices, and the human participants in the dialogue seem to express anxiety about failing, perhaps by accident, to provide a sacrificial offering adequate to attract the gods, especially Indra. The hymn begins (vs. 1) with the sacrificer's wife, who is

also Indra's daughter-in-law, anxiously noting Indra's absence from the sacrifice. In verse 2 Indra responds that he protects those who provide him adequate soma; the singer (probably) replies, perhaps a bit testily, that not only do they press soma and cook bulls for Indra, but Indra does consume this provender (vs. 3).

There follows an abrupt change of subject, or at least change of tone. Indra begins verse 4 with "Mark well this (speech) of mine, singer" and then alludes glancingly to what appear to be animal fables of the sort found in much later texts like the Pañcatantra. In verse 5 the mortal expresses doubt about his ability to understand the god because of his (the mortal's) simple nature, but also expresses certainty that the god will enlighten him at the right time. The next three verses (6–8) we will take up below. The animal fables return in verses 9 and 10, while the last two verses (11–12) contrast greedy people, who consume what was destined for the sacrifice and thereby actually weaken themselves, with the hard-laboring sacrificers, who thrive.

The hymn is thus structured in the following way: the outer verses (1–3, 11–12) concern successful and unsuccessful sacrifices and sacrificers, the opening verses being more personal, the final ones more general. Within this frame there is an inner ring of verses (4–5, 9–10), which establish a dialogue between mortal and god about this problem and which express the god's teaching in the simple terms a mortal can understand, that is, in animal allegories briefly alluded to. This double ring of complementary verses thus surrounds and marks out the center of the hymn, verses 6–8, and especially the exact center of the twelve-verse hymn, verses 6–7. These two verses are also rhetorically responsive, and both their position and their structure define them as an omphalos. Furthermore, they are uttered directly after the singer has expressed certainty that Indra will proclaim his doctrine at the right time (vs. 5cd). Everything in the context seems to mark these verses as the direct teaching of Indra, his significant message—and, indeed, as his epiphany, the epiphany that was expected but not realized in verse 1. The vaunting self-praise in the omphalos verses contrasts strangely with the animal fable verses that form the inner ring around them, for in those the message seems to be rather that the weak can best the strong.

The re-transition from the ātmastuti ("self-praise") of the omphalos (vss. 6–7) to the animal fables (vss. 9–10) is effected by an even more enigmatic verse (8). Though it does not match any of the structurally paired verses of the rest of the hymn, it may carry the key to the whole, for it seems to treat the original establishment of the sacrifice, instituted first by the gods. This reminds us of the more elaborate treatment of the origins of the sacrifice in X.27.13–18 (esp. 15), and it also suggests that the sacrifice is the tool by which the weak (currently mortals) may control the strong (Indra and the gods), as in the animal fables that enclose the hymn's center. Reached by way of a playful transition (vss. 10d, 11a), the final two verses (11–12) return us to the present day and the ritual situation, and remind us of the contrast between sacrificers and non-sacrificers in the first half of X.27, especially verses 2 and 7.

A word about the animal verses. Despite the major importance of animal fables and allegories in later Sanskrit, there is essentially nothing like them in Vedic, especially early Vedic, and even the allusions to stories we have here—which are reminiscent of the summary verses of Pañcatantra tales—are unique in the Ṛgveda. Keeping in mind that animal stories are not told in later Sanskrit simply to amuse, but are overtly instructive and educational, especially for callow and wayward youth, we can connect the use of these allusions in this hymn to the singer's self-description as "a simple man," incapable of understanding Indra's message (vs. 5). Indra is tailoring his instruction to the mental abilities of his hearer: rather than express himself in the usual mysteries of Ṛgvedic high style (as in the immediately preceding X.27), Indra packages his message in a series of beast fables. If this reading of the hymn's general scenario is correct, then we must assume already for the Ṛgvedic period not only the existence of a body of story literature, of animal fables, but also (more interestingly) a fairly organized functional role for this literature in an instructional setting, conforming to the same model that we find quite a bit later in Indic literature in general. And this in turn may lead us to reconsider the standard views of the history of Indian literature and especially the connections between Vedic and Classical genres.

For further discussion of this hymn, see Jamison (2004a; 2007: 80–83; 2008b).

1. [Sacrificer's wife:] While every other stranger has come here, only my father-in-law has not come here.
   He should eat the roasted grains and he should drink the soma. Well-fed he should then go home again.
2. [Indra:] The sharp-horned bull [=soma] continually bellowing has mounted to the height (of heaven), upon the expanse of the earth.
   In all communities I protect him who, having pressed the soma, fills both my cheeks.
3. [Singer/Sacrificer:] With a stone they press the exhilarating, powerful soma-drinks for you, Indra. You drink of them.
   They cook bulls for you. You eat of them—coming when you are summoned with nourishment, bounteous one.
4. [Indra:] Mark well this (speech) of mine, singer: The rivers carry the flotsam against their current.
   The fox crept up on the lion, his opponent; the jackal sprang on the boar from out of the underbrush.
5. [Singer/Sacrificer:] How shall I mark this (speech) of yours—I, a simple man, mark the inspired thought of you who are clever and strong?
   You who know will declare to us at the proper time toward which half your chariot-pole is to come to rest, bounteous one.
6. [Indra:] Because in this way they grow me strong, higher even than lofty heaven is my chariot-pole.
   Many thousands do I "grind down" all at once, for the begetter begot me as one without rival.

7. [Indra:] Because in this way they begot [/knew] me as strong and powerful, at every action (calling) "o Indra" (to me,) the bull—the gods (did this)—
   I smashed Vṛtra with the mace, while exhilarated; I opened up the enclosure through my greatness for the pious one.
8. [Indra:] The gods came; they carried axes; hewing the trees, they advanced with their clans toward (the ritual ground),
   depositing the good wood in the belly [=the hearth(s) of the ritual fires]. Where there is brushwood [?], they [=flames?] burn it up.
9. [Indra:] The hare swallowed the razor coming toward it. I split apart a rock with an earth clod from afar.
   Even a lofty one shall I weaken for a weakling. The calf, swelling up, will pursue the bull.
10. The eagle caught its talon just so, like a lion entrapped into a snare.
    The buffalo also got trapped, when it was thirsty. The monitor-lizard plowed this way for him.
11. The monitor-lizard will plow *this* way for those who taunt the brahmins with their food.
    The very same ones eat the released oxen, themselves breaking their powers, their own bodies.
12. But these (others) have become very fortunate by their ritual labors—the ones who urged themselves on at the soma(-pressing) with their hymns.
    Speaking manfully, measure out prizes to us; in heaven you have established your fame, your name as "hero."

X.29 (855) Indra

Vasukra Aindra
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Shorter than Vasukra's other two hymns, but no less daunting in the intricacy of its expression, especially in verse 1, which displays phonological, morphological, and syntactic tricks too numerous and too dense to discuss in detail here. (See Jamison [forthcoming c].) Suffice it to say that the verse manages to refer, by indirection and implication, to the five most important gods at the dawn ritual: Agni, Indra, Vāyu, and the Aśvins, though only Indra is named. (Dawn is the sole important divinity absent, but she appears in the first pāda of the next verse.) Besides the common Ṛgvedic habit of employing words applicable to two or more referents, the verse shows in embryo a device prized in later kāvya: that of allowing a single phonological sequence to be read in two of more different ways by means of variant word divisions. Add to this an unprecedented syntactic construction, which is also a syntactic pun, and dizziness ensues for the hearer/reader.

The structure and thematic contents of the hymn are less clear than in X.27 and 28, however. After the first two extremely opaque verses, which appear to treat the dawn ritual and the divine conjunction of Indra and Agni (and probably of the two Aśvins), the poet turns his hopes and attention to attracting Indra to show himself at the sacrifice, to produce an epiphany (see esp. vs. 4), through properly performed offerings. There are a number of obscurities in these verses as well, especially verse 5, and the lack of a perceptible structure hampers our efforts to clarify them. Much remains to be excavated from this rich poetic mine.

1. Whether he takes pleasure in the wood or not, he [=Agni] has been installed (as priest) [/been deposited (in the wood)]. The gleaming praise has waked you two, o bustling ones [=Aśvins, or Agni and Indra]—
   (the praise) in which Indra (took pleasure) on many days (as did) the Hotar [=Agni]—(each being) the manly one, best man among men, earth-protector.
2. At the forefront of this dawn here and of the later one, might we be at the manly prancing of you [=Indra], who are the best man of men.
   Triśoka [/the three-flamed one (=Agni)] brought a hundred men here (on the same chariot) with Kutsa—the chariot that will be victorious.
3. Which exhilarating drink is to be enjoyed by you, Indra? As powerful one, run to my hymns through the doors.
   When (will) the vehicle, (that is,) the inspired thoughts, (come) near to me? I would compel you here to highest generosity with (my offerings of) food.
4. When (will) the brilliance of one such as you (come) to our men, Indra? With which hymnic vision will you equip yourself? When will you come to us,
   (to be) actually present like an ally, o wide-ranging one, for our offering—though there could be inspired thoughts at anybody's food (offering)?
5. As the sun sends (each man) forth to his task, do you send forth, (like a boat) to the further shore, those who go, each to his own desire, as if going to the providers of wives,
   and those men who seek to empower their many hymns for you, powerfully born Indra, along with their (offerings of) food.
6. The two copious "measures," heaven and earth, are now well fixed by your might, by your poetic skill.
   Let the ghee-rich pressed soma-drinks be to your liking, let the honey-drinks be in sweetness for your drinking.

7. They poured out a tankard of honey for him, a full one for Indra, for he is one whose generosity is real.
He has grown strong on the expanse of the earth, the manly one pre(eminent) through his will and his masculine powers.
8. The very powerful Indra has penetrated the battling hosts. The many (hosts) marshal themselves for him, for his comradeship.
Mount upon the hosts like a chariot that you will spur on with auspicious benevolence.

Hymns X.30–34 are attributed to Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, though Oldenberg (1888: 234–35) entertains the possibility that this group should be joined with the Vasukra hymns that precede on the basis of shared phraseology.

X.30 (856) Waters or Apām Napāt

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is very ritually determined, and in fact it tracks closely the ritual acts performed in the classical śrauta ritual at its recitation in the soma sacrifice. In verses 1–3 the Adhvaryu priests are sent to fetch water for the soma-pressing, but first make an offering to the waters and the Child of the Waters (Apām Napāt). The Adhvaryus then bring the waters to the sacrificial ground (vss. 4–9), with a reminder that they (the waters) owe a favor to Indra, the principal drinker of soma, because he freed them (vs. 7). More praise of the waters follows (vss. 10–12) as they approach the place of sacrifice. They arrive in verses 13–14, and the pressing can begin in verse 15.

The feminine and enthusiastically yielding nature of the waters (the stem *áp* being feminine in gender) and their relationship to various masculine forces, the Adhvaryus (vs. 2), Soma (vss. 5–6), and the gods (vs. 15), are also emphasized.

1. Let the course for our sacred formulation go forth to the waters that are among the gods, as if by the harnessing of mind,
to the great wellspring of Mitra and Varuṇa. I will make the well-twisted (hymn) subject to that which possesses broad expanse [=waters?].
2. O Adhvaryus, since you have become provided with oblations, go to the eager waters, o eager ones—
(the waters) upon which the ruddy eagle gazes down. Harness the wave today, o you of skillful hands.
3. O Adhvaryus, go to the waters, to the sea. Sacrifice with your oblation to the Child of the Waters.
He will give you the well-purified wave today. For him press the honeyed soma,

4. (For him) who shines without kindling wood within the waters, whom the inspired poets call upon at the ceremonies.
O Child of the Waters, give the honeyed waters by which Indra grows strong for his heroic deed,
5. By which Soma is delighted and becomes excited, like a young blood with lovely young women.
Go forth to these waters, o Adhvaryu. When you will pour (them) in, then purify (them) with plants.
6. Just in that way young women accede to a young man, when he goes to them who are eager as he is eager.
They are agreed in mind and they perceive alike—the Adhvaryus, the Holy Place, and the divine waters.
7. He who made wide space for you who were blocked, he who freed you from the great curse,
to him, to Indra, propel your honeyed wave that exhilarates the gods, o waters.
8. Propel to him the honeyed wave, which is your embryo, o rivers, and is a fountain of honey—
(the wave) with ghee on its back, worthy of invocation at the ceremonies. Rich waters, hear my call.
9. Rivers, propel the exhilarating wave providing drink to Indra, which rouses both (races? [=gods and men]),
(the wave) arousing exhilaration, stemming from the *uśānā*-plant, born of a cloud, the fountain that spreads widely around the triple-threaded (sacrifice?).
10. Those whirling about in two streams, roving like cattle-raiders in teams, the begetters and masters of existence—the waters grown strong together sharing the same womb: o seer, now extol them!
11. Impel our ceremony by a sacrifice to the gods; impel our sacred formulation to gain the spoils.
At the yoking of truth unloosen your udder. Grant us attentive hearing, o waters.
12. O rich waters, because you hold sway over the good, and you bring favorable resolve and the immortal (soma?),
and you are masters of wealth that brings good progeny, let Sarasvatī establish this vital energy for the singer.
13. As the waters have just appeared in front—on their way here, bringing ghee, milk, and honey,
allying in mind with the Adhvaryus, bringing the well-pressed soma to Indra—
14. They have now arrived here, rich and bringing spoils for the living. O Adhvaryus, comrades, make them take their seats;
set these down on the ritual grass, you (comrades) in soma, these who are allied with the Child of the Waters.

15. The eager waters have come here to this ritual grass. Seeking the gods, they have taken their seats at the ceremony.
Adhvaryus, press the soma for Indra. The sacrifice to the gods has become easy for you to master.

X.31 (857) All Gods

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

An extremely obscure hymn. As in many such compositions, one of the major sources of obscurity is the uncertainty of the referents in many key verses and the possibility of multiple referents in such cases. The interpretation given here is tentative and uncertain, and even if correct, or partially so, it does not exclude other possible interpretations. In our view, the hymn speculates about the mystery of the sacrifice, about the relations between men and gods that the sacrifice encodes, and about Agni, the most conspicuous symbol of the sacrifice and the mortal–immortal partnership, as the foundational principle of the cosmos and the neutralization of the distinction between space and time. Although assigned to the All Gods, this is obviously not a conventional All God hymn (if such exist) but one for which the designation serves as a cover for mystic speculation. If it has a conventional deity, it is Agni.

The hymn begins innocently enough with four verses establishing the ritual scene. However, even in the first verse we encounter something unusual: the raw material of the sacrifice seems to be seeking *us* out, as if the gods themselves were assisting us in our duties toward them. Nonetheless, verse 2 asserts that the mortal sacrificer must exert his own inherent powers in order to perform a proper sacrifice and receive its benefits. The happy result of the mutual action of men and gods (note the latter are called "helpers" in 3b) is expressed in verse 3, and in verse 4 (particularly full of unidentified referents; see esp. pāda d) it seems that the central divine figure Agni is well pleased and that other gods have favored the sacrificer as well.

Verses 5–6 are roughly the center of the hymn (especially since vs. 11 is a pseudo-dānastuti); they are verbally responsive (note the *asyá* beginning 5c, 6a, and 6c, for example), and they introduce a larger cosmic dimension to the depiction of the sacrifice. They thus qualify as an omphalos. Most important in these two verses are the three words for "earth" that knit them together: *kṣắḥ* in 5a, *bhū́man* in 6b, and, by implication, *pṛthvī́*, disguised in the feminine participle *paprathānắ* in 6a, derived from the same root (*prath*) as *pṛthvī́* in 9a. (The three words—*kṣắḥ, bhū́man*, and *pṛthvī́*—are reunited again in vs. 9, a good indication that the conjunction in vss. 5–6 was deliberate.) This emphasis on the earth in a ritual context seems to make an implicit claim that the sacrificial ground *is* the earth. In verse 5 the sacrificial context is more overt: this seems to concern the distribution of the dakṣiṇās or priestly gifts at dawn. Verse 6 is more opaque, but in our view refers to the benevolence of a well-pleased Agni radiating outward. The second half of verse 6 provides a transition to the cosmic speculations that follow: the "lord" of 6a seems still to be Agni, with his womb containing, on the one hand, his flames, and, on the other hand perhaps, the gods.

The speculations of verses 7–10 begin, as often, with an unanswerable question about the origins of the cosmos. Verse 7 also contrasts the stable and unchanging quality of heaven and earth (space) with the ever-changing and aging aspect of time. This opposition in a way provides the framework for the next few verses, although the direct connection between 7 and what follows is superficially dim. However, if, as we believe, the next three verses (8–10) concern Agni, he partakes of both space and time, and provides the foundation for both. He supports heaven and earth (8b)—there is no reason to look elsewhere (8a)—but he is also in constant motion (8cd, 9ab) and appears in many guises (9cd). He thus grounds the stability of the spatial cosmos while being in constant motion through it. In the same way (vs. 10), temporal aging is represented by his regular rebirth, but because of the paradox that he is born before his parents, temporal advance is negated. The space/time conundrum is solved! The last clause of verse 10, "if they should inquire" / "when they shall ask," is in our view the formal closure to the cosmic speculation opened by a question in verse 7 and not confined to the themes of verse 10.

The final verse (11) has all the trappings of a dānastuti, appended to the hymn, but it seems to refer to a very obscure saga also encountered in I.117.8, an Aśvin hymn.

1. Let the laud of the gods, the means of sacrifice, come in quest of us, to help us, along with all the overpowering ones [=gods].
Might we come to have good fellowship with them. Might we be those who cross over all difficulties.
2. A mortal should await material wealth along the path of truth; he should seek to win it through reverence.
And he should consult with his own resolve and grasp better skill with his mind.
3. The insightful thought has been set in place; the (sacrificial) portions have been sent surging. The helpers [=gods] come close to the wondrous one [=Agni] as if to a ford.
We have attained the fortifying (hymn) for our good faring; we have become cognizant of the immortals.
4. Our own constant lord and master of the house [=Agni?] should find pleasure (in him [=sacrificer?]) for whom the god Savitar has given birth,
or Bhaga and Aryaman should anoint him with cows. That one seems beloved to him, and so he should be.

5. Might this earth here be like (the place) of the dawns. When the possessors of livestock [=gods? patrons?] have assembled here with their strength,
desiring to partake of the praise of this singer, let the powerful prizes approach us.
6. The good favor of just this one, spreading out, became the foremost cow throughout the land;
in the womb of this lord are those of the same nest, being borne in the same burden.
7. What was the wood, and what the tree from which they carved out heaven and earth,
the two that stand together, unaging and enduring? But the days, the many dawns, grow old.
8. There does not exist another of such kind beyond that. The ox bears heaven and earth.
With a will of his own, he makes his skin into a purifier, when they convey him, as the tawny (horses) do the sun.
9. Like a snake [?], he passes over the wide earth; as wind (blows) away mist, he blows across the land,
where, being anointed as Mitra and as Varuṇa, like a fire in the forest, he has let loose his flame.
10. When the barren cow [=kindling stick] gave birth all at once as she was being driven/anointed, she, though faltering, did so unfalteringly, since she has her own herdsmen [=priests].
When the son [=Agni] was born before his two parents [=kindling sticks], the cow [=lower stick] swallowed the peg [=upper stick]—if they should inquire.
11. They say that Kaṇva is the son of Nṛṣad [/of the one who sits among men], and Śyāva [/the dusky], the prizewinner, took the stakes.
The gleaming udder swelled for Kṛṣṇa [/the black one], but in there no one made the truth swell for him.

X.32 (858) Indra

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
9 verses: jagatī 1–5, triṣṭubh 6–9

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn to Indra, in fact the hymn falls into two separate parts, defined by both meter and content. The first five verses in jagatī are indeed Indra's, but the last four verses (6–9) in triṣṭubh are more appropriate to Agni. However, these two parts fit together into a larger thematic whole.

The verses dedicated to Indra follow to some degree a conventional "journey" hymn trajectory: Indra's pair of horses bring him to the sacrifice in verse 1, with the journey further described in verse 2. Verse 4 appears to concern the focal point of the sacrifice, the sacrificial ground or, more precisely, the fire altar, to which all the sacrificial participants and substances make their way. A two-way journey is foreseen in verse 5, with Soma (if this identification is correct) on his way to the gods, and Indra and companion gods on the way to the sacrifice.

Several features disturb this simplistic sketch of the hymn. First, the journey is also conceived of as a wedding journey; in addition to verse 3 (to be discussed) see especially the "wooers" in verse 1 and the bridal procession in verse 4. Moreover, the middle verse of this portion of the hymn, verse 3, has a pronounced omphalos character. It announces itself as a wonder, and then produces three striking paradoxes: the son who knows his parents' birth (pāda b), the wife who conveys her husband on the bridal journey (pāda c), and the same role reversal seen from the husband's point of view, a bridal procession made for the man (pāda d). It is difficult to know exactly what to make of this, but it appears that Indra's journey to the sacrifice is being imagined as the wedding journey of a bride. The hyper-virile Indra is in some sense filling the passive role of bride—a fine conceit, though one that the poet does not over-emphasize.

The focus on the "seat" in verse 4, quite possibly the hearth, as well as the first paradox of verse 3, the son who knows his parents' birth, a typical Agni trope, turn our attention to that god in the second part of the hymn. The installation and kindling of the ritual fire are the subject, and the mythic model is the well-known tale of Agni's flight, concealment in the waters, and recovery (vs. 6ab). The narrator owes his knowledge of this to Indra (6cd); in verse 7 he makes a general statement about the value of instruction for the uninitiated. This short sequence is reminiscent of nearby X.28, in which Indra acts as the instructor of the callow. Verse 8 returns to Agni and describes the kindling of a dormant fire. The enigmatic verse 9 presents itself as a sort of reverse dānastuti, though with the identity of the speakers being somewhat unclear.

1. The two (horses) are come, those in the power of the one being conjured up by our insights [=Indra]—(they are come) to the wooers taking their seats in front along with (the other) wooers.
Indra will find pleasure in both (offerings) of ours when he will take cognizance of the soma-stalk.
2. O much-praised Indra, you drive across the heavenly luminous realms and across the earthly ones through the airy space.
Those who convey you in an instant right up to the ceremonies, let them vanquish the ungenerous ones who chatter.
3. Just this will appear to me as more wondrous than any wonder: that the son knows by heart the birth of his parents.
The wife conveys the husband amid the uproar; just for the man an auspicious bridal procession has been made ready.

4. Just this dear seat do I ponder, to which the milk-cows will direct (their journey) like a bridal procession,
as will the foremost mother of the flock, a wise counselor, and the sevenfold people of the music.
5. Seeking the gods (he [=Soma?]) has left a track on his way toward you. The one who alone surpasses [=Indra] drives with the Rudras,
or among the immortals among whom old age is for giving. Pour honey all around for your helpers.

6. The protector of the commandments of the gods has announced to me that the one who was hidden in the waters [=Agni] is (now) being installed.
Because knowing Indra kept you in his sights, instructed by him have I come here, o Agni.
7. Because the one not knowing the field asked the field-knower, he goes forth, instructed by the field-knower—
this, truly, is the good of instruction—and he finds the straight course.
8. Just today did he [=Agni] breathe. He waited (all) these days; covered over, he sucked his mother's udder.
Old age has reached the youth. No (longer) angry, the good one has become of favorable mind.
9. Might we do these auspicious things in giving bounties, o wooden vessel, o Kuruśravaṇa.
Let this be a gift just for you, bounteous ones, and this soma here, which I bear in my heart.

X.33 (859) Lament of a Singer [Anukramaṇī: All Gods 1, Indra 2–3, Dānastuti of Kuruśravaṇa Trāsadasyava 4–5, Upamaśravas Mitrātithiputra 6–9]

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
9 verses: triṣṭubh 1, bṛhatī 2, satobṛhatī 3, gāyatrī 4–9

A poignant yet proud 1st-person lament of a poet whose patron has died, the hymn also serves as a sort of job application to his erstwhile patron's son. The progress of the poem is marked by changes in meter. In the first verse the poet remembers his former privileged position and, in its last pāda, the sudden advent of disaster. The next two verses (a pragātha) describes his present miserable state (in terms found also in part in I.105.8) and begs Indra for help. In the last six verses, in gāyatrī, the poet first recalls how he "chose" (a telling expression) his former patron Kuruśravaṇa (vss. 4–6). He then introduces himself to the son, Upamaśravas (vs. 7), but returns in the final two verses (8–9) to his helpless sorrow over the death of his patron and companion.

1. The advance teams of the peoples hitched me up in front. As always, I carried Pūṣan within.
All the gods then guarded me. There was a shout, "The one of bad command has come."

2. They scorch me all about, like cowives, (like ailing) ribs.
Inattention, nakedness, and exhaustion oppress me. Like a bird, my attention keeps fluttering here and there.
3. Like mice their tails, the cares gnaw at me, your praiser, o you of a hundred resolves.
At once show mercy to us, bounteous Indra, and become like a father to us.

4. I chose Kuruśravaṇa of Trasadasyu's line as my king,
most liberal to his cantors—I a seer—
5. (Saying,) "He whose three tawny (horses) convey me on his chariot along the straight way—
I shall praise him at a (sacrifice) with a priestly gift of a thousand (cows)"—
6. (I chose) the father of Upamaśravas for whom there were sweet songs, delightful like a dwelling place for one at home in it.
7. Learn, o Upamaśravas, his son, o grandson of Mitrāthiti:
I am the celebrant of your father.
8. If I could be the master of immortals or of mortals,
my bounteous patron would still live.
9. No one lives beyond the commandment of the gods, even one with a hundred selves.
And thus have I turned away from my yokemate.

X.34 (860) Gambler

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa or Akṣa Maujavant
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7

One of the most famous, most translated, and most anthologized hymns in the Ṛgveda, this lively and vivid lament of the gambler depicts the sad lot of a man addicted to dicing but unsuccessful at it. This hapless speaker describes the intoxication that grips him when he is playing or even contemplating play and that leaves him helpless to resist (vss. 1, 5–9), as well as the toll this compulsion takes on his personal life and the self-pity this evokes in him (vss. 2–4, 10–11). At the end of the hymn the gambler vows to renounce play (vs. 12), and the god Savitar restores him to his former position (vs. 13). The final verse (14) is the gambler's address to the dice, urging them to leave him alone and find another victim. This portion of the

hymn has the form of a ritual expiation, embodied especially in the last words of 12d, in which the gambler avows the truth of his speech.

Dicing was an important cultural feature of ancient India, especially associated with kings and the ruling class. Already in middle Vedic sacrifice, in the Rājasūya, the ritual of the consecration of the king, there is a ritual dicing match, rigged so that the king-to-be wins. Of course, the whole of the great epic, the Mahābhārata, is determined by the outcome of the dicing match between Yudhiṣṭhira and his cousins: Yudhiṣṭhira gambles away his kingdom, his brothers, his wife, and himself and must fight to regain his kingship. The much-loved story of Nala and Damayantī also involves the gambling away of a kingdom, this time by Nala. And the dharma texts consider gambling, along with hunting and womanizing, to be a characteristic pursuit—and vice—of kings (cf. Mānava Dharma Śāstra VII.47, 50; for condemnation of gambling in general see, e.g., MDŚ IX.220–28).

Ancient Indian dicing was quite different from the game that the word conjures up in the modern mind, and much scholarship has been devoted to figuring out what the play actually consisted of (see, e.g., Lüders 1907; Falk 1986). It seems to have involved a large quantity of a particular kind of nut (*vibhīdaka /vibhītaka*) as the dice; these had no markings on them. They were thrown into a hollow on the ground, and the players took turns pulling out a handful. The best "hand" was one divisible by four, and the other hands were ranked according to how many nuts were left over after a division by four, with a single leftover nut being the worst (see vs. 2c). For details, see Falk (1986: 73–133). Although it may be hard for us to imagine the passions enflamed by this kind of long division, our own games of chance probably will not stand up to scrutiny some millennia in the future.

The monologue form found here is almost unprecedented in the Ṛgveda, and the shifting play of emotions—guilty excitement, tender remembrance of his past life and family, scorn for his own weakness and the disgust he arouses in others, bitter anger at the inanimate dice that brought him low, to which he ascribes agency and malign intention and for which he still longs—is psychologically convincing and very moving. Showing our own biases, we might proudly deem it quite "modern."

1. The dangling (nuts) of the lofty (tree) exhilarate me, the ones born in a windy place, constantly whirling in the gaming hollow.
   Like a draught of soma from Mt. Mūjavant, the wakeful vibhīdaka nut has pleased me.
2. She did not oppose me, nor did she get angry; she was gracious to my comrades and to me.
   I, on account of one die too many, have pushed away my avowed wife.
3. Her mother-in-law [=my mother] hates me; my wife pushes me away.
   A man in distress finds no one to pity him.
   "I find no more use for a gambler than for an old nag up for sale," (so they say).
4. Others fondle the wife of a man whose possessions the die with eyes on the prize has hungered for.
   Father, mother, brothers say about him, "We do not know him; lead him away bound."
5. When I resolve, "I will not play with them," I am bereft of my comrades, who go off (without me).
   And as soon as, scattered down, the brown (dice) have raised their voice, I just go to their appointed place, like a girl with a lover.
6. The gambler goes to the hall of play asking himself, "will I win?" puffing himself up with "I will win!"
   The dice run counter to his desire, conferring the winning throws on his opponent.
7. They are just "dice"—but hooking, goading, debasing, scorching, seeking to scorch,
   giving (temporarily) like a child, then in turn slapping down the victor, infused with honey, with power over the gambler.
8. The troop of them plays, three times fifty strong. Like god Savitar's, their ordinances hold true.
   Even to the battle fury of the mighty they do not bow; even the king makes his bow to them.
9. Downward they roll; up above they ricochet. Lacking hands, they overpower the man with hands.
   Heavenly coals scattered down in the gaming hollow, though they are cold they burn up the heart.
10. The wife of the gambler, abandoned, is scorched, and the mother of the child wandering who knows where.
    In debt, fearful, seeking money, he approaches by night the house of others.
11. It scorched the gambler to see a woman—the wife and well-ordered home of others.
    Since early in the day he hitched up his brown horses [=dice], the "little bullock" fell [=left off gambling and sought shelter] (only) at the end of the fire [=late at night].
12. [Gambler:] He who has become the general of your great throng, the foremost king of the troop,
    to him I put forth my ten (fingers): "I withhold no money. This truth I speak."
13. [Savitar:] "Don't keep playing with dice; just plow your own plowland. Be content in your possessions, thinking them much.
    There are your cows, o gambler, there your wife." In this way does Savitar here, protector of the stranger, watch out for me.

14. [To all the dice:] Make alliance (with us) now; have pity on us. Do not conjure against us boldly with your terrible (mind/eye).
Let your battle fury now settle down, your hostility. Let another now be in the toils of the brown ones.

The next four hymns (35–38) form a group, though they are not all attributed to the same author (see Oldenberg 1888: 229 n. 2, 235). The first two, to the All Gods, are attributed to Luśa Dhānāka, while the other two were given fanciful poets' names derived from the contents of the hymn itself: 37 Abhitapas Saurya ("Scorching Heat, son of the Sun") and 38 Indra Muṣkavant ("Indra, possessing testicles").

X.35 (861) All Gods

Luśa Dhānāka
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13–14

This is primarily a morning hymn, calling especially on the gods associated with the early morning sacrifice for aid and protection: the Sun, the Dawn, Agni, Indra, the Aśvins, as well as Heaven and Earth. The ten interior verses (3–12) have a pāda-length refrain dedicated to the kindled ritual fire, and the activities of Dawn occupy much of the hymn (esp. vss. 3–6). The hymn opens out toward its end, with special focus on the Ādityas (vss. 9, 11–12), but the later prominence of the Ādityas has been prepared by mention of "blamelessness" in earlier verses (2–3) and by the "proclamation of truth" in verse 8. This truth, formulated in 8c, is simply that "the Sun, as spy," rises every day, but we know from elsewhere in the Ṛgveda (nearby X.37 belonging to the same poetic group [see discussion there], as well as, e.g., VII.62.2, VII.63.1) that the Sun is the eye of the Ādityas, especially Mitra and Varuṇa, who attests to the innocence or guilt of the men whom he sees as he rises. Thus this brief truth formulation encapsulates our knowledge that our place in the moral order is mediated through the cosmic order of the daily rhythm of sunrise.

1. They have awakened—these fires accompanied by Indra, bringing light at the early brightenings of the dawn.
Let great Heaven and Earth take cognizance of our work. Today we choose the help of the gods.
2. We choose the help of Heaven and Earth. The Mother Rivers, the Mountains filled with (soma-)reeds,
the Sun, the Dawn we beseech for blamelessness. Let Soma, being pressed, make good for us today.
3. Heaven and Earth—let the two great mothers protect us, who are blameless, for our welfare.

Let Dawn, dawning, thrust away evil. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
4. This foremost ruddy one here, *this lovely goddess—let her, the rich lady, dawn richly for our gain.
In the distance (from us) we would set the fury of the one who is bad to meet. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
5. Those who stretch forth with the rays of the sun, bringing light at the early brightenings of the dawn,
do you dawn good things widely today for our fame. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
6. Let the dawns without affliction attend upon us; let the fires rear up loftily with their light.
Let the Aśvins hitch up their thrusting chariot. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
7. The best portion, worthy to be chosen, impel to us today, o Savitar, for you are a conferrer of treasure.
I call on her, the begetter of wealth, on the Holy Place. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
8. Let this proclamation of truth carry me through, the one that as sons of Manu we have thought up for the gods:
"Through all the ruddy (dawns) the Sun, as spy, (always) goes up." – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
9. Today at the strewing of the ritual grass, at the yoking of the pressing stones we beg for lack of hatred and for the realization of our thought.
Standing in the shelter of the Ādityas, you are astir. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
10. Here is our ritual grass for the joint revelry. I reverently invoke the gods lofty in heaven. I will make the seven Hotars sit (on the ritual grass).
(We beseech) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Bhaga, for our gain. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
11. Ādityas, come here for our wholeness; aid our sacrifice for us to grow strong, you who take pleasure together.
(We beseech) Bṛhaspati, Pūṣan, the Aśvins, Bhaga. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
12. O gods, Ādityas, extend to us this shelter good to proclaim, of good support, protective of men,
for our livestock, for our kith and kin to live. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
13. Let all the Maruts today all (be there) with aid, let all the kindled fires be (there with aid).
Let all the gods come here to us with help; let all wealth, (every) prize be for us.

14. One whom you help, o gods, at the winning of prizes, one whom you safeguard, one whom you carry across narrow straits,
one who knows no fear under your protection—may we be (all) those, to pursue the gods, powerful ones.

X.36 (862) All Gods

Luśa Dhānāka
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13–14

This hymn is a clear companion piece to the preceding one, X.35. Both hymns consist of fourteen verses, all jagatī except the last two in triṣṭubh. Both have a refrain, and the refrain of X.36 (vss. 2–12) is a minor variant of the last pāda of the first verse of X.35. And there is some shared vocabulary. However, X.36 is not tied closely to the morning sacrifice, as X.35 is. The range of gods invoked in X.36 is wider than those in X.35, although there is a distinct Ādityan cast here as well (see vss. 1, 3–4, 12–13). The hymn seems somewhat loosely and inattentively constructed.

1. Dawn and Night, lofty, well-ornamented—Heaven and Earth, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
Indra I invoke, the Maruts, the Mountains, the Waters, the Ādityas, Heaven and Earth, the Waters, the Sun.
2. Both Heaven and Earth—let those two discerning truthful ones guard us from narrow straits, from harm.
Let Dissolution, bad to meet, not gain mastery over us. – This help of the gods we choose today.
3. Let Aditi protect us from every narrow strait—the mother of Mitra and of Varuṇa the wealthy.
Might we attain sun-filled light that keeps the wolf away. – This help of the gods we choose today.
4. Let the pressing stone as it speaks drive away demonic forces: the bad dream, dissolution, every devourer.
Might we attain the Ādityan shelter and that of the Maruts. – This help of the gods we choose today.
5. Let Indra sit here on the ritual grass; let the refreshing drink swell. Let Bṛhaspati the chanter chant along with the melodies.
We would compose a thought possessing good signs for our life. – This help of the gods we choose today.
6. O Aśvins, make our sacrifice heaven-touching and of lively ceremony, to seek favor—
a sacrifice with its reins pointed eastward, bepoured with ghee. – This help of the gods we choose today.

7. I invoke the Marutian flock, (which is) good to invoke, (which is) pure, high, luck itself—for comradeship.
Might we acquire the thriving of wealth in order to receive good fame. – This help of the gods we choose today.
8. We will bring (forward) the one swollen with the moisture of the waters, providing riches for the living, pursuing the gods, good to invoke, the glory of the ceremony.
Soma, destined for Indra, with his good reins would we hold fast. – This help of the gods we choose today.
9. May we win this through easy winning with winners—we living and with living sons, blameless.
The haters of the sacred formulation should take their own transgression off in all directions. – This help of the gods we choose today.
10. You who are worthy of the sacrifice of Manu, listen: what we beseech you for, gods, give that—
resolve that brings victory, glory accompanied by wealth and heroes. – This help of the gods we choose today.
11. A great thing of the great ones we choose today: the help of the lofty gods without assault,
so that we may attain the good born of heroes. – This help of the gods we choose today.
12. In the shelter of great Agni while he is being kindled (may we be) blameless to Mitra and Varuṇa for our well-being;
may we be under the best impulsion of Savitar. – This help of the gods we choose today.
13. All (you) Gods who are under the commandment of Savitar, whose impulsion is real, and of Mitra and Varuṇa—
establish well-portioned property in heroes and cows, brilliant wealth for us.
14. Savitar from behind, Savitar from in front, Savitar from above, Savitar from below—
let Savitar impel wholeness to us; let Savitar bestow on us a long lifetime.

X.37 (863) Sūrya

Abhitapas Saurya
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

Some of the themes sketched in X.35 are developed in this hymn into a more satisfyingly shaped composition. Though the hymns are not ascribed to the same poet,

the name of the supposed author of X.37, Abhitapas Saurya ("Scorching Heat, son of the Sun"), is an artificial one, derived from the hymn's subject matter.

In X.35 the daily rising of the sun, expressed as a brief truth formulation (X.35.8), was implicitly connected with the poet's desire for "blamelessness" and for the protection of the Ādityas, but these themes were scattered through the hymn, which focused primarily on the early-morning sacrifice and the various gods associated with it. Here the Sun is primary, and his role as the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa, and thus as the observer of mortals' guilt or blamelessness, is announced at the beginning (vs. 1a), and an expanded version of the truth formulation of X.35.8 is found in the second verse.

The benefits the Sun brings to us and the regularity of his return form the subject of the middle part of the hymn. The connection between our moral behavior and the Sun's daily round is asserted again toward the end of the hymn (vs. 9), which concludes (vs. 12) with a general expiation for faults unwittingly committed and a scapegoating of our enemies.

1. Homage to the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa. Do great service to this truth [=hymn] for the god.
   To the one seen from afar, the signal born of the gods, the son of heaven, to the Sun—recite!
2. Let this expression of reality protect me around on all sides, where(ver) Heaven (and Earth) and the days will extend:
   "Every other thing that stirs settles down. But always the waters (are in motion), always the Sun rises."
3. No godless one seeks the upper hand against you early in the day, when you drive your chariot with its flying steeds.
   The one (wheel) rolls eastward along the dusky realm; with the other one, the light, you drive upward, o Sun.
4. The light with which you thrust away the darkness, o Sun, and the radiance with which you rouse up every moving creature,
   with that drive away from us every want of nourishment, every lack of oblation, drive away disease, away the bad dream.
5. For impelled forth, you guard the commandment for all, when not being angry you proceed upward following your own customs.
   When today we will appeal to you, o Sun, the gods should give assent to our intention.
6. This call of ours let Heaven and Earth, this speech of ours let the waters, Indra, and the Maruts hear.
   Let us not be in want of the sight of the Sun. Living happily may we attain old age.
7. Always may we—of good mind, of good eye, rich in offspring, without disease, without blame—
   living a long time look upon you rising every day, o Sun who have Mitra's might.

8. Upon you, o wide-gazing one, bringing great light, luminous, a joy to every eye,
   mounting from the surface of lofty (heaven)—may we, living, look upon (you), o Sun.
9. You at whose signal all creatures both go forth and settle down at night—
   by reason of our blamelessness, o golden-haired Sun, rise up with ever better (fortune) for us day after day.
10. Be luck for us with your eye, luck for us by day, luck with your radiance, luck in the cold, luck in the heat,
    so that there will be luck on the road, luck at home. This brilliant wealth establish (for us), o Sun.
11. To both our breeds, o gods, to the two-footed and the four-footed, extend shelter.
    Eating, drinking, drawing nourishment, satiated: establish for us this luck and lifetime without flaw.
12. Whatever we have done to you, o gods, with our tongue or through absence of mind, whatever grave (offense) angering the gods,
    on the ungenerous one who brings misfortune to us, on him set down this offense, o good ones.

X.38 (864) Indra

Indra Muṣkavant
5 verses: jagatī

The fanciful name of the poet in the Anukramaṇī ("Indra possessing testicles") is extracted from the final pāda of the poem (5d); the hymn clearly belongs with the other compositions of Luśa (X.35–38). It is a martial hymn, calling on Indra to fight on our side in pitched battles, vanquishing our enemies and sharing the booty he acquires. The style is lively and at times slangy, especially in the final verse, with its surprise ending: depicted as all powerful in the rest of the hymn, Indra is revealed to be not entirely free, but in some unspecified thrall to Kutsa (otherwise a client of Indra's in the Ṛgveda), and the poet taunts Indra to break the bonds.

1. At this glorious battle charge, Indra, at the vehement battle cry, help us to win,
   when at the winning of cattle, when the bespangled (warriors) have been emboldened, the missiles fly in all directions at the time to conquer superior men.
2. Uncover for us at our seat wealth in livestock, flooding with cows, worthy of fame, o Indra.
   May we share the fat with you when you win, able one. As we want it, make it so, good one.

3. Whatever godless one, Dāsa or Ārya, will have in view to fight us, o much-praised Indra—
   let those rivals be easy to conquer for you along with us. With you may we vanquish them in the clash.
4. Who is to be invoked by the few and who by the many, who finds wide space in close quarters at the time to conquer superior men,
   him—the winner in the devouring (battle) today, the famous superior man—Indra may we make inclined toward us for help.
5. For I have heard of you, Indra, as tightly wound, unyielding, spurring on (even) the feeble, o bull.
   Release yourself from Kutsa! Come here! Will such a one as you stay tied by the balls?

From X.39 through X.56 the hymns are arranged in groups of three, each trio generally ascribed to the same poet by the Anukramaṇī. See Oldenberg (1888: 236).

The next three hymns, dedicated to the Aśvins, are attributed to a female poet Ghoṣā (X.39–40) and her son (X.41). Ghoṣā herself bears the patronymic Kākṣīvatī "daughter/descendant of Kakṣīvant," the exceptionally artful poet of I.116–126, who is especially devoted to the Aśvins: five of his eleven hymns are dedicated to them (I.116–120). Indeed the phraseology and mythological references of the Ghoṣā hymns share much with Kakṣīvant's Aśvin hymns, and whether we accept the Anukramaṇī's ascription of the hymns to a woman and her son (the latter identified by the metronymic Ghauṣeya), there can be no doubt that these hymns have a remarkably close relationship to the Kakṣīvant hymns in Maṇḍala I. It is worth remembering that Kakṣīvant shows a particular interest in women and marriage in his hymns.

All three of the Ghoṣā hymns begin with a verse invoking the Aśvins' chariot, but they diverge significantly thereafter. The final hymn (X.41) is a brief (three-verse) pendant to the series, straightforwardly describing the Aśvins' early-morning journey to the sacrifice and urging them to come to our offering in preference to other possible ones. The other two are more complex, with significant involvement of an apparent woman's voice, especially in X.40, which focuses on marriage.

X.39 (865) Aśvins

Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13

This first hymn in the series is in most ways a standard Aśvin hymn, especially in the Kakṣīvant mode. After the first verse devoted to the chariot and a plea to the Aśvins for lavish gifts (vs. 2), the hymn settles into the familiar pattern of many Aśvin hymns, in a list form briefly mentioning good deeds performed and benevolent

treatment meted out by those two gods. The first catalogue is fairly brief, consisting of the two verses 3–4, with a formulaic summary ("I shall proclaim your ancient heroic deeds...") in verse 5. The poet promises to make the Aśvins "new" (5c), just as they famously made Cyavāna young again (4ab). A second longer catalogue of deeds, more formally constructed, occupies verses 7–11.

But these lists are interrupted (in vs. 6) by a surprising, 1st-person intrusion: a woman (the feminine pronoun *iyám* opens the verse and makes the gender of the speaker unmistakable) calls upon the Aśvins and begs them to serve as her parents and aid her in her plight, since she lacks friends and relations. The reason for her distress is not given, but the traditional view that she is asking them to find her a husband seems reasonable, given that an orphaned girl would have no marital prospects and would be quite vulnerable to mistreatment. Her verse closely echoes the first verse of the hymn: she uses the same verb "invoke" and uses a paternal image like that in verse 1d.

This heartrending verse seems to have no sequel in the hymn. Although it is not impossible that the following catalogue verses are also her speech, it seems unlikely because of their strict conformity to Aśvin-hymn diction. While it is certainly true that the next verses mention several females helped by the Aśvins (the wife for Vimada, the aid given to Vadhrimatī and to Puraṃdhi, vs. 7; to Viśpalā in vs. 8), males are just as often recipients of their favor in those verses, and the most striking female figure, the spinster growing old in her parents' house in verse 3, who is identified with the woman in verse 6 and indeed with Ghoṣā by many commentators, is not in a verse that our female speaker could be saying.

The female speaker in this hymn foreshadows and complements the female speaker, explicitly identified as Ghoṣā, in the next hymn (X.40.5–8), and the speaker in this hymn is often said to be that same Ghoṣā. However, in the opinion of one of us (SWJ) this is quite unlikely because our speaker bemoans her lack of kin, while Ghoṣā in X.40.5 is said to be a king's daughter. Instead, the two female speakers seem meant to contrast with each other and to reflect extreme poles of women's status in a marital context. The other of us (JPB) sees the speaker's lament in 39.6 that she has no friends or relatives as a metaphorical and hyperbolic characterization of her unhappy life rather than a literal description of it. In that case the speaker in X.39 could the woman called Ghoṣā in X.40.

Another, enigmatic reference to a woman is found in verse 11, which ends the catalogue. The verse declares that no trouble afflicts a man if the Aśvins put his chariot and his wife (*pátnī*) "in front." What exactly is meant here is unclear, but we suggest that this is yet another fleeting reference to the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife (*pátnī*) into the ritual in late Ṛgveda; the chariot and the wife leading the way remind us of the Mudgala/Mudgalānī hymn (X.102), in which Mudgala's wife, Mudgalānī, serves as successful charioteer in a chariot race—a hymn we have also interpreted as a reference to the new ritual institution of the Sacrificer's Wife. (For further discussion, see the introduction to X.102.)

The hymn ends with a return to the Aśvins' chariot drive (vs. 13), with a few more incidental good deeds, and a summary verse announcing our own praise hymn (vs. 14).

1. Your earth-encircling, smooth-rolling chariot, to be invoked at evening and at the dawns by the man who offers oblation—
that (chariot) of yours do we now invoke, (we) as the latest of those who constantly do so—the (chariot) good to invoke like the name of one's father.
2. Stimulate liberal giving; swell our insightful thoughts; rouse profusions—we are eager for that.
Make us a glorious portion, o Aśvins; make it dear to our generous patrons like soma.
3. You become good fortune even for the woman growing old at home, the helpers even of the one lacking speed, even of the one furthest behind.
Even of the blind man, o Nāsatyas, even of the starving, even of the broken—they say just you are their healers.
4. You two fashioned old Cyavāna, like a chariot, into a youth again, (for him) to move about.
You pulled the son of Tugra out from the waters. All these (deeds) of yours are to be proclaimed at the pressings.
5. I shall proclaim your ancient heroic deeds before the people. And you were also healers, embodiments of joy.
Now we shall make you new (for you) to help us, o Nāsatyas, so that this stranger will place his trust (in us?).
6. [A woman:] "It's I who invoked you: hear me, o Aśvins. Like parents for their son, do your best for me.
I am without friends, without kin, without blood relatives, and heedless: rescue me in the face of this shame."
7. You two with your chariot carried down to Vimada the sleek maiden of Purumitra (to be his wife).
You two came to the call of Vadhrimatī. You two made an easy birth for Puraṃdhi.
8. You two made youthful vigor again for the inspired poet Kali, who was approaching old age.
You two dug Vandana out from the antelope snare. You two in an instant made Viśpalā go.
9. You two raised up Rebha, set in hiding and already dead, o bullish Aśvins.
You two made the earth-cleft and the heated (pot) comfortable for Atri, for Saptavadhri.
10. You two gave to Pedu a white horse, a prizewinner with nine and ninety prizes, o Aśvins,
(a horse) to be celebrated, one setting its comrades to running, to be invoked by men like good fortune, and the embodiment of joy.

11. O you two kings and Aditi—not from anywhere does distress or difficulty or fear reach him
for whom you arrange that his chariot, along with his wife, will be in front, o Aśvins good to invoke, you who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts].
12. Drive here with your chariot swifter than thought, which the Ṛbhus made for you, o Aśvins,
and at whose hitching up the Daughter of Heaven [=Dawn] is born and both bright-lit day halves of Vivasvant.
13. You drove your course with your victorious (chariot) through the mountain. You made the milk-cow swell for Śayu, o Aśvins.
With your powers you two freed the quail, which had been swallowed, even from within the mouth of the wolf.
14. We have made this praise song for you, o Aśvins. We have fashioned it, like the Bhṛgus a chariot.
We have clasped it to ourselves like a dashing youth a maiden, holding it close like our own son who continues our lineage.

X.40 (866) Aśvins

Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī
14 verses: jagatī

As suggested in the introduction to X.39, we two translators have different interpretations of the ritual context for this pair of hymns. Accordingly we have contributed contrastive, signed discussions of the hymn's context in this introduction.

SWJ

As already noted, the hymn begins with a mention of the Aśvins' chariot journey (vs. 1) and indeed continues with speculations on their whereabouts (vss. 2–3) and a description of our attempts to attract them to our sacrifice (vs. 4). These verses contain vivid imagery, especially the contrastive pictures of sexual pairing in verses 2–3 (see also X.39.14c, which is a mirror image of 40.2d).

These erotic images prepare the way for the scenes of apparent betrothal and marriage that follow (vss. 5–11). These verses open with the speech of a woman identified as Ghoṣā, whose status as king's daughter contrasts with that of the bereft, unnamed woman who speaks in X.39.5 (see the introduction to that hymn). Ghoṣā boldly addresses the Aśvins themselves and demands to know if they will "be there" for her (vs. 5). The scene sketched is, in my opinion, a Svayaṃvara or woman's "self-choice" marriage. The stage has been set for this in verse 3d, where the Aśvins are described as coming to soma-pressings "like kings' sons" (*rājaputrā́*).

This tatpuruṣa compound is found only here in the Ṛgveda and would neatly identify the Aśvins as appropriate suitors coming to a Svayaṃvara, where the woman making the choice would likewise be a king's daughter (5b). Her unabashed speech, questioning them about their suitability as husbands and supporters, would be fitting in a Svayaṃvara context.

The next verses (6–8) seem to depart from the marriage theme, and it is not possible to be certain that they are spoken by Ghoṣā. I believe they are, however, because the marital theme continues beneath the surface: verses 5–7 contain four somewhat problematic instances of the preverb *pári* "around" (5a, 6a, 6c, 7c), in the same metrical position, but in awkwardly unidiomatic verbal lexemes. The problems they cause for the translator are seen in the somewhat "off" English that represents them. This intrusive *pári* is, in our opinion, an insistent reminder of the wedding context, evoking one of the important parts of the wedding ceremony, the *circum*ambulation of the fire, and also evoking the consummation of the marriage, the embrace of the bride, found close to the end of these wedding verses, in 10d "the wives are to be embraced (***pariṣvajé***)."

Ghoṣā's likely speech ends with verse 8, ostensibly praising the Aśvins for "giving freedom/wide space" to various individuals and opening up an enclosure with all the characteristics of the Vala cave, a deed not usually attributed to the Aśvins. The wide space created and the opening up of the enclosure can (perhaps fancifully) be taken metaphorically here, in this wedding context, for the deflowering of the virgin bride.

The following two verses (9–10) return to the narrator/poet and describe the wedding itself, but develop the theme identified in the previous verse. In the first pāda of verse 9 the maiden is born—presumably born into womanhood, after the "opening up" just performed. The "little lad" in flight in the same pāda may be her bridegroom, or even a pet diminutive for his penis. The next two pādas (9bc), with sprouting plants and flowing rivers, are generally interpreted as expressing nature's approval of the marriage; in contrast we again consider them metaphorical, expressing the advent of sexual maturity and sexual awakening. The sprouting sprouts of pāda b remind us of the maiden Apālā's prayer that her pubic hair would grow along with the plants in the fields (VIII.91.5–6); the rivers of pāda c might either be her first menstrual blood, the blood from her deflowering, or sexual fluids produced by arousal. This verse ends with the same phrase that Ghoṣā used in her question to the Aśvins, "be there for the day," but with a reversal of genders (the bride will be there for her husband, as Ghoṣā asked the Aśvins to be there for her), followed by the triumphant "this is marriage!" While verse 9 treats marriage as an intimate exchange between the two principals, verse 10 brings us back to the social aspects of marriage: the exchange relation created between the families and the effort required to bring it about. The mysteries of sex are, mysteriously, touched on in verse 11.

The hymn ends with three verses (12–14) more conventionally addressed to the Aśvins with requests for goods and aid, though the final verse (14) echoes the questions about the whereabouts of the Aśvins that began the hymn.

JPB

An alternate view of the ritual context of X.39–40 is that both hymns find a place in an Atirātra, an Overnight Soma Sacrifice, in the morning rites that conclude the ceremony. In these rites, which are a continuation of the rites of the Third Pressing from the previous evening, the Aśvins return in the morning of the second day to receive a last offering of soma. The references to the night between evening and morning oblations (e.g., X.40.2), to the soma offerings (X.39.4, 40.13, 14), and, of course, to the Aśvins, to whom both hymns are dedicated, accord with the ritual context of an Atirātra.

One of the themes of the Third Pressing in the classical soma rites is the fertility of the sacrificing couple. Since this is a relatively late hymn, the Wife of the Sacrificer may already have been a participant in the rite for which these hymns were composed. Therefore, the hymns might have been an appeal to the Aśvins to help make the marriage of the sacrificing couple a success by giving them a son. Thus, the "little lad" who "has taken flight" in the puzzling verse 9 might be the hoped-for child, whose birth marks the success of their marriage. His "flight" can refer to his conception; the image of an embryo "flying" to the womb also occurs in X.162.3. For a detailed study of the hymn that reflects this interpretation, see Brereton 2013.

1. Your chariot that is driving where—who attends to that brilliant one for
   its good progress, o men—
   the (chariot) driving early in the morning, extending to every clan,
   traveling at every dawn—(who attends to it) with insightful thought
   and labor?
2. Where in the evening, where at dawn will the Aśvins make their evening
   meal? Where did they spend the night?
   Who takes you to bed, like a widow her brother-in-law, or to a
   rendezvous like a maiden a dashing youth?
3. You awaken early in the morning like a pitiable [?] old couple; at every
   dawn you, deserving the sacrifice, come to the house.
   For whom do you become occulted, or for whom do you descend to his
   soma-pressings like kings' sons, o men?
4. Like hunters on the track of wild elephants, we call you down in the
   evening and at dawn with our oblation.
   You two bring refreshment to the man who pours the libation in proper
   order, you superior men, you lords of beauty.
5. Circling around you two, o Aśvins, Ghoṣā, the daughter of a king, said,
   "I ask you, o men:
   Will you be there for me for the day and be there for the night? Will you
   exert your abilities (for me, as if) for a steed (to win the prize) of horse
   and chariot?

6. "You two poets circle around your chariot, o Aśvins; you arrive at the clans of the singer, as Kutsa (arrived at the poet/Kavi Uśanā).
The bee holds the honey of you two encircled with her mouth, o Aśvins, as a young woman (holds) a tryst (within her mouth) [=keeps quiet about it].
7. "You two came to Bhujyu, o Aśvins, you to Vaśa, you to Śiñjāra, to Uśanā.
The hostile man will circumvent your comradeship, but I find pleasure in your benevolence along with your help.
8. "You two make wide space for Kṛśa, you for Śayu, o Aśvins, you for the worshiper and the widow.
You two open up the thundering enclosure with its seven mouths for the sake of gain, o Aśvins."
9. The maiden has been born, and the little lad has taken flight. And when sprouts have sprouted according to (the Aśvins') wondrous powers,
the rivers flow for him as if into a valley; (she) is there for him for the day (and for the night): this is marriage!
10. They cry over the living; they make a mutual exchange at the rite. The men [=relatives of the couple] have been devising (the marriage) for a long stretch:
It is a precious thing for the fathers, that they brought (the couple) together; a joy for husbands that their wives are to be embraced.
11. We do not know this—proclaim it to us—how a young man dwells peacefully in the womb of a young woman.
Might we go to the house of the seed-laden bull who has a ruddy cow as his beloved, o Aśvins. We are eager for this.
12. Your benevolence has come here, you Aśvins whose goods are prize mares. Our desires have held themselves down firmly in our hearts, Aśvins.
You have become the paired herdsmen, the two lords of beauty. Dear to Aryaman, might we reach his porticos.
13. Reaching exhilaration in the dwelling of Manu, provide wealth along with heroes to the eloquent one.
Make a ford that offers good drink, o lords of beauty. Smash away the post standing in our path, the malevolence.
14. Where today and among which clans do the wondrous Aśvins, the lords of beauty, find exhilaration?
Who has held them down? To the house of which inspired poet or sacrificer have they gone?

X.41 (867) Aśvins

Suhastya Ghauṣeya
3 verses: jagatī

As we already noted in the introduction to this group of hymns, this brief appendix is a conventional journey hymn. Nothing in this hymn, save the treatment of the chariot in verse 1, makes its relationship to the two preceding Ghoṣā hymns evident. The poet is identified as a son of Ghoṣā by the metronymic Ghauṣeya; his first name, Suhastya "Good-handed," is extracted from verse 3.

1. This your common three-wheeled chariot—much invoked and worthy of praise, going again and again to the soma-pressings,
earth-encircling and worthy of the rites—do we invoke with well-twisted (hymns) at the break of dawn.
2. O Nāsatyas, you mount the early-yoked, early-driving, honey-bringing chariot,
by which you go to the sacrificing clans, o men, and to the sacrifice even of a weak man, with its Hotar, Aśvins.
3. Whether you are going to an Adhvaryu of good hands with honey in his palms, or to an Agnidh of steadfast skill, a domestic leader,
or to the soma-pressings of an inspired poet, from there drive here to honey-drinking, o Aśvins.

Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa is said to be the poet of the next three hymns (42–44), all dedicated to Indra and showing clear verbal connections.

X.42 (868) Indra

Kṛṣna Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The usual mutually beneficial relationship between Indra, giver of bounties and aid in battle, and the singer/sacrificer offering poems and oblations in exchange is the theme of this hymn. However, the hymn is scarcely run-of-the-mill, for the poet has captured the relationship in a series of deftly fashioned images, and the balance between giving god and offering mortals is maintained throughout.

1. Like an archer in ambush who shoots farther, like a busy attendant, bring forth the praise song for him.
With your speech, o inspired poets, surpass the speech of the stranger.
Bring Indra to rest at our soma, o singer.

2. Try to entice your comrade here, (like) a cow with milking. Singer, awaken Indra (like) a lover.
   Bestir the champion to the giving of his bounty, like a full bucket overflowing with goods.
3. Do they not call you the benefactor, bounteous one? Sharpen me: I hear that you are the sharpening.
   Let my insight be profitable, able one. Bring Bhaga, the goods-finder, here to us, Indra.
4. The peoples, taking their stand in conflict together, separately call upon you in the struggle for "what's mine."
   Whoever offers an oblation makes (you) his yokemate here: the champion wants no fellowship with a non-presser.
5. Whoever, providing a pleasing offering, presses for him sharp soma drops, ample like streaming wealth (on the hoof),
   for him (Indra) makes a team of his rivals, easily spurred, easily goaded, in the early morning of the day. He smashes the obstacle [/Vṛtra].
6. Indra, upon whom we have set our laud, the bounteous one who has fixed his desire upon us—
   let his rival, though he is far away, take fright, and let the peoples' brilliant things bow down to him.
7. Thrust the rival far away into the distance with that mighty *śamba*-pole of yours, o you who are much invoked.
   Set (a mass of) barley and cattle on us, Indra. For the singer, make his insight possessed of prizes as its ornaments.
8. Indra, within whom the bullish pressings, the sharp soma drops, have gone, ample to the end—
   the bounteous one will certainly not hold back his giving. He carries down much of value to the presser.
9. And having overplayed his hand, he will win the jackpot, when the (gambler) with the best throw pulls out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the right time.
   Whoever has desire for the gods, he does not withhold the stakes; just him does the autonomous one [=Indra] unite with wealth.
10. With cows we would overcome neglect that goes ill, and with barley we would overcome all hunger, o you who are much invoked.
    With our kings and our community might we be the first to win the stakes.
11. Let Indra, lord of the formulation, protect us all around, from behind and from above and from below, from him who wishes ill—
    from in front and from the middle. Let him, as comrade, create wide space for his comrades.

X.43 (869) Indra

Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10–11

This second of Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa's three eleven-verse Indra hymns has very clear ties to the previous one, X.42. They share the last two verses (10–11), as well as lexicon and phraseology. Yet the two hymns are thematically distinct, and X.43 lacks the carefully balanced reciprocity of X.42. The focus here is on liquids—on nourishing streams of water (vss. 3, 6–8) as well as on soma (vss. 2, 4, 6–8)—and on finding the sun or the light (vss. 1, 4, 5, 8). These themes together evoke the triumphant progress of the Ārya, conquering rivers and finding sunlit space, which is mythically embodied in Indra's release of the waters confined by Vṛtra indirectly reflected in verse 8b. This recourse to the mythic model accounts for the references to Manu, the primal Ārya sacrificer (vss. 4, 8).

One can point to a nice index of the different uses even shared elements are put to in the two hymns X.42 and X.43: identical or almost identical phrases assign roles to exactly opposite personnel. Thus, the phrase "fix desire on someone" (√*śri kā́mam* LOCATIVE) is found in both X.42.6b and X.43.2b; in the former Indra has fixed his desire on us, while in the latter I have fixed my desire on Indra. Similarly, in the elaborate gambling simile found almost identically in X.42.9abc and X.43.5ab it is the mortal who is the subject in X.42 and Indra in X.43.

1. My thoughts—sun-finding, all directed to a single goal, eager—have bellowed to Indra.
   They embrace him as wives do their husband, embrace the bounteous one like a sleek young blood, for help.
2. Directed toward you, my mind does not lose the track: just on you have I fixed my desire, o much invoked one.
   Like a king, wondrous one, sit down upon the ritual grass. Since there is soma here, let there be drinking for you.
3. Indra, warding off from diverse directions neglect and hunger—just he, as bounteous one, will be master of wealth and goods.
   Just his vitality do these seven rivers, in their torrent, increase—the vitality of the tempestuous bull.
4. Like birds on a leafy tree, the soma drops—exhilarating, sitting in the cup—have settled down on Indra.
   Their countenance, powerfully flashing forth again and again, found the sun, the light of the Ārya, for Manu.
5. Like a (gambler) with the best throw he pulls out the perfect ("hand" of dice) in the game, when the bounteous one wins the sun as his takings.
   No other will be able to match this heroic deed of yours, neither one of the past, o bounteous one, nor of the present.

6. Clan after clan does the bounteous one encircle, as the bull keeping watch over the nourishing streams of the peoples.
In whose soma-pressings the able one rejoices, that one vanquishes, with his sharp soma juices, those doing battle.
7. When the soma juices have flowed together into Indra, like waters into a river, like brooks into a pond,
the inspired poets at the (sacrificial) seat increase his greatness, like rain the barley, with the heavenly gift [/drop].
8. Like an angry bull he flies among the airy realms—he who made these waters here to have an Ārya as their husband.
The bounteous one found light for the presser possessing lively gifts [/drops], for Manu who offered oblation.
9. Let the axe [=fire] arise, together with its light. The (cow) of truth, yielding good milk, should come into being as of old.
Let the ruddy, blazing (fire) shine out with its radiance. The master of settlements should blaze like the blazing sun.
10. With cows we would overcome neglect that goes ill, and with barley we would overcome all hunger, o you who are much invoked.
With our kings and our community might we be the first to win the stakes.
11. Let Indra, lord of the formulation, protect us all around, from behind and from above and from below, from him who wishes ill—
from in front and from the middle. Let him, as partner, create wide space for his partners.

X.44 (870) Indra

Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, jagatī 4–9, triṣṭubh 10–11

This last in the trio of Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa's Indra hymns shares its final two verses (10–11) with the previous two hymns, though it otherwise has little in common with them. The hymn bristles with difficulties in the details, but its overall trajectory is clear: it is a journey hymn, inviting Indra to drive to our sacrifice (vss. 1–3) to take his place on the ritual ground and partake of our soma (vss. 4–5). The poet then contrasts evil-minded non-sacrificers with their generous counterparts (vss. 6–7). The poet gives a brief précis of the heroic deeds Indra accomplished in the past after drinking soma (vs. 8), and in verse 9 urges Indra to defeat the poet's enemies, while making himself at home at the soma sacrifice.

1. Let Indra, our own lord, drive here for exhilaration—he who, forceful, thrusting according to his own principle,
is projecting his vigor over all powers with his boundless, great bullishness.

2. Your chariot provides a good standing place and your fallow bays are easy to control. Your mace is attached to your fist, o lord of men.
Along a good path, o king, drive swiftly in this direction. We will strengthen your bullish powers when you have drunk.
3. Let the conveyors of Indra convey him here, the lord of men in whose arm is the mace; mighty and forceful, let them convey him, the mighty,
the bull who projects his vigor, possessing real unbridled power; let his feasting companions convey him here among us.
4. Just in this way you drench yourself in the lord [=soma], the companion of the cup, the like-minded one, the prop of nourishment upon its support.
Make it your might; take it entirely within you, so that you will be powerful for the strengthening of those who keep watch (over us) nearby [=patrons?].
5. Good things shall come to us, for I have expressed my prayer. Drive here to the soma-possessor's offering, which is accompanied by good prayers.
You are master. Take your seat here on this ritual grass. Your cups cannot be ventured against, on (ritual) principle.
6. The first invocations to the gods went forth each separately. They brought themselves fame difficult to surpass.
The *non-protectors [?], who were not able to board the ship of sacrifice, sank down in stillness.
7. Just exactly in this way let the ones of evil intent, whose horses have been badly yoked, be behind and facing backward;
correspondingly, those who are nearer and facing forward, they are (ready) to give, when the many (ritual) patterns and nourishments are (in place).
8. He gave foundation to the trembling mountains and plains. Heaven cried out and made the midspaces quake.
He props apart the two Holy Places [=Heaven and Earth] that were conjoined. Having drunk of the bull, he recites the solemn words in his exhilaration.
9. I bring this well-made crook to you, with which you will break the hoof-breakers, o generous one.
Let there be a home for you in this soma-pressing. Become a sharer in our pressed soma and in our quest, bounteous one.
10. With cows we would overcome neglect that goes ill, and with barley we would overcome all hunger, o you who are much invoked.
With our kings and our community might we be the first to win the stakes.

11. Let Indra, lord of the formulation, protect us all around, from behind
and from above and from below, from him who wishes ill—
from in front and from the middle. Let him, as partner, create wide
space for his partners.

Although the Anukramaṇī names Vatsaprī as the poet of only the next two hymns (45–46) to Agni, the following (47) to Indra clearly belongs here as well, as Oldenberg argues (1888: 236).

X.45 (871) Agni

Vatsaprī Bhālandana
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with Agni's triple birth, in heaven, on the earthly sacrificial ground, and in the waters (vs. 1), and the next verses touch on Agni's several forms (vss. 2–3). The cosmic aspects of Agni (vss. 4–6, 8) are thus marshaled in service of the ritual Agni, installed as fire-priest in verse 7, and it is therefore easy to believe in the good things that will come to the mortal who sacrifices to Agni (vss. 9–12).

1. From heaven was Agni born first; from us was he born second as Jātavedas.
(Born) a third time in the waters, the inexhaustible one—kindling him,
the manly minded, very attentive (mortal) sings to him.
2. We know your threefold triads, Agni; we know your domains dispersed
in many places.
We know your highest name, which is hidden; we know the wellspring
whence you have come here.
3. In the sea, in the waters has the one with a manly mind (kindled) you; the
one with manly eye kindled (you) in the udder of heaven, o Agni.
The buffaloes strengthened you, who were standing in the third realm, in
the lap of the waters.
4. Agni has roared like thundering heaven, constantly licking at (heaven
and) earth, anointing the plants,
for as soon as he was born kindled, he surveyed them. He radiates with
his radiant beam between the two world-halves.
5. Rouser of beauties, buttress of riches, propeller of inspired thoughts,
with Soma as herdsman,
good one, son of strength, king in the waters, he radiates forth, being
kindled at the forefront of the dawns.
6. Beacon of all creation, the embryo filled both world-halves while he was
being born.

He split even the solid rock in leaving it, when the five peoples sacrificed
to Agni.
7. The fire-priest, pure circlet, very wise—Agni has been installed as
immortal among the mortals.
He raises reddish smoke, as he carries it here and there, seeking to reach
up to heaven with his blazing flame.
8. Seen as a bright ornament, he has flashed forth widely, alight for beauty
through a lifetime hard to forget.
Agni became immortal through his vital powers, when Heaven of good
seed begat him.
9. Whoever will make for you today a ghee-covered cake, o god Agni of
fortunate flame,
lead him further forward, toward a better state, toward favor
apportioned by the gods, o youngest one.
10. Give him a portion in (ritual acts) deserving good fame, Agni; give him
a portion in every solemn speech being pronounced.
He will become dear to the Sun, dear to Agni. He will burst out with
(offspring already) born, burst out with those to be born.
11. Sacrificing to you, Agni, through the days, they have acquired all
desirable goods.
Together with you the fire-priests, seeking wealth, have opened up the
pen full of cows.
12. Agni has been praised by the seers—Vaiśvānara, well-disposed to men,
having Soma as his herdsman.
We would invoke Heaven and Earth, the two without hatred. O gods,
establish wealth rich in heroes for us.

X.46 (872) Agni

Vatsaprī Bhālandana
10 verses: triṣṭubh (and virāj)

Attributed to the same poet as X.45, this hymn is clearly a companion piece to the previous hymn, sharing much of the same specialized lexicon (e.g., *uśíj* "fire-priest") and an interest in the various forms and births of fire and their relation to the ritual fire. However, X.46 is, for the most part, more rhetorically driven and more obscurely phrased than X.45, with images pushed to the edge of intelligibility (and beyond; see, e.g., vs. 7). The trickiness of its phraseology is matched by its meter, a shifting combination of triṣṭubh and virāj lines, with a number analyzable as either. Nonetheless, the emphasis on the installation of the ritual fire is manifest throughout: the original installation (vss. 4, 8–10), the reinstallation of the disappearing Agni (vss. 2–3), and the current installation (vss. 5–6).

1. Forth (he goes) when just born—the Hotar, the great cloud-finder;
   seated among men, he sat down in the lap of the waters.
   He who has been established establishes vital powers for you; he is
   the extender of goods to the man who does honor and he is the
   protector of bodies.
2. This one here—having done honor to him in the seat of the waters, they
   followed him along his tracks like a vanished cow.
   With reverences seeking him who was hiding in secret, the fire-priests,
   the insightful Bhṛgus found him.
3. This one here—Trita Vaibhūvasa, much seeking, found him on the head
   of an inviolable cow.
   Growing strong with kindness when just born here in the habitations,
   the youth becomes the navel of the luminous realm.
4. The fire-priests with their reverences made him the gladdening Hotar,
   the leader of the ceremonies, and made the sacrifice advance,
   made him the pure circlet of the clans, when they established him as the
   oblation conveyor among the sons of Manu.
5. Forth (they lead him), *glittering, great, conferring poetic inspiration,
   splitter of strongholds, no fool—(even) fools (do so).
   Leading him, the embryo of the trees, the gold-bearded one, like a steed
   for whom a verse is the prize, they have set forth an inspired thought.
6. Trita [= the "third" fire], standing fast in the dwelling places,
   surrounded, sits down inside the womb.
   From there the domestic leader of the clans [=Agni], having amassed
   (goods?), with his reinless (horses) speeds to the superior men
   through the spreading expanse.
7. His are the unaging oars of the houses, the pure fires with
   singing smoke,
   bright, swelling, bustling, sitting on the wood like winds (in trees), like
   soma-drinks (in the wooden cups).
8. Agni displays his own pulsing excitement with his tongue, (displays) the
   patterns of the earth with his appearance.
   Him, blazing and pure, have the Āyus established as gladdening Hotar,
   most worthy of sacrifice.
9. Agni, whom Heaven and Earth begat, whom the Waters, Tvaṣṭar, and
   the Bhṛgus begat with their powers,
   the one first to be reverently invoked—Mātariśvan and the gods
   fashioned him as the means of sacrifice for Manu.
10. You whom the gods established as conveyor of the oblation, whom the
    sons of Manu, craving much, established as means of sacrifice,
    o Agni, establish vital power for the praiser on your course. One who
    seeks the gods ad(vances), for glory gets the girls.

X.47 (873) Indra

Saptagu Āṅgirasa
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Though the Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to a different poet from the last two, structural considerations make it clear that it belongs with X.45–46, as Oldenberg convincingly argues (1888: 236); the Anukramaṇī has simply extracted the name Saptagu Āṅgirasa from verse 6, where it is properly applied to the god Bṛhaspati. Nonetheless, the subject matter of this hymn is quite distinct from the two Agni hymns that precede it: it is a naked demand to Indra for wealth. The hymn has a superficially monotonous structure consisting of attributes in the accusative: verses 2–5 form a single sentence dependent on the second hemistich of 1. But this monotony conceals, or rather reveals, the poet's cleverness, for it is entirely ambiguous whether the accusatives modify Indra or the "wealth" of the refrain found in all the d-pādas. In the former case, the adjectives would agree with the accusative *tvā* in the verb phrase found in 1c *vidmā́ hí tvā* "for we know you (as)," punctuated and interrupted by the syntactically unconnected refrain; in the latter case with the accusative *rayím* in the refrain. The semantics of the predicate adjectives in these verses would allow either, sometimes slightly tipped toward one or the other. It may seem that the question is settled finally in verse 5, where we encounter the first noun—*vā́jam* "prize"—in this sea of adjectives, since "prize" might seem a more likely synonym of "wealth" than of Indra. However, in the rhetorical universe of the Ṛgveda it would certainly be possible to refer to a god as a prize. We think it highly likely that the poet intended the audience to consider both possibilities throughout the sequence.

The last three verses (6–8) more conventionally state that praises are being offered, to Bṛhaspati (vs. 6) and to Indra (vss. 7–8), in return for favors.

1. We have grasped your right hand, Indra, seeking goods, you goods-lord
   of goods,
   for we know you as cow-lord of cows, o champion. – To us give bright,
   bullish wealth.
2. Possessing good weapons, good help, good guidance, supporting four
   seas worth of riches,
   ever to be celebrated, praiseworthy, bringing abundant things of value.
   – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
3. Accompanied by good sacred formulations, accompanied by the gods,
   lofty, wide, deep, broad-based, o Indra,
   accompanied by famous seers, powerful, vanquishing hostility. – To us
   give bright, bullish wealth.
4. Winning prizes, having poets as heroes, overwhelming, gaining the stakes,
   swelling with strength, of good skill,
   Dasyu-smashing, stronghold-splitting—(above all) *real*, o Indra. – To us
   give bright, bullish wealth.

5. Rich in horses, in chariots, in heroes, a thousandfold, hundredfold prize, o Indra,
having beneficial troops, having poets as heroes, sun-winning. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
6. To the one with seven cows [/Saptagu], whose poetic vision is truth, to Bṛhaspati of good wisdom my thought goes forth,
to him, the Āṅgirasa, who is to be reverently approached with homage. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
7. My eager messengers, my praises, proceed to Indra, begging for favors,
touching the heart, intertwining with the mind. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
8. What I beg you for, give that to us, Indra—a lofty dwelling place without equal among the peoples.
Let Heaven and Earth applaud this. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.

The next three hymns (X.48–50) are both ascribed to and dedicated to Indra Vaikuṇṭha. Given the supposed identity of poet and dedicand, the first two of these are appropriately cast as Indra's own self-praise.

X.48 (874) Indra Vaikuṇṭha

Indra Vaikuṇṭha
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7, 10–11

As noted immediately above, X.48 and 49 present themselves as Indra's self-praise (*ātmastuti*, on which see Thompson 1997). They are spoken in the 1st person, with insistent 1st-person pronouns and verbs. In this hymn only verse 10 lacks an explicit 1st-person form, and the first verses especially establish the pattern: each pāda of verse 1 begins with a 1st-person pronoun (*ahám, ahám, mắm, ahám*), as does each half-verse of verse 2 (*ahám, ahám*), and again, each pāda of verse 3 (*máhyam, máyi, máma, mắm*). (Of the 1st-person singular pronominal paradigm, only instrumental *máyā* and ablative *mát* are absent from this hymn, and both are poorly attested in the Ṛgveda [three and twelve times respectively].)

The contents of the self-praise range over Indra's many accomplishments, but especially focus on his victories in battle and what he has won thereby—a warrior's boast, in other words. Some of the exploits are obscure, indeed mentioned only here (e.g., vs. 8).

The only verse lacking 1st-person reference, verse 10, appears to be a riddle, with a balanced opposition between the good or successful man (?), who has soma within, and his opposite number, whose failure is exposed by his lack of soma. But this interpretation must remain tentative, given the puzzles in that verse.

1. I was the foremost lord of goods. I win the stakes over and over.
Upon me do the creatures call, like kinfolk their father. I apportion food to the pious man.
2. I am Indra, the bulwark and breast(-plate) of the Atharvan. For Trita I begat the cows from the serpent.
I took the manliness from the Dasyus, through my abilities seeking to win their cowpens for Dadhyañc and Mātariśvan.
3. For me Tvaṣṭar fashioned the metal mace. To me have the gods bent their will.
My face, like that of the sun, is difficult to surpass. They recognize me by what has been done and is to be done.
4. I (win) livestock in cows and horses, overflowing and golden, with my weapon.
Many thousands do I "grind down" for the pious man, when the soma drops accompanied by hymns have brought me to exhilaration.
5. I am Indra: only I have not had the stake won away, and never have I given way to death.
Just when you are pressing soma, beg me for good things. You will not suffer harm in partnership with me, o Pūrus.
6. I (struck down) by twos those, snorting heavily, who caused Indra and his mace to fight (them);
I struck down with my stroke those who were challenging (me), while I, unbowable, was talking tough to those to be bowed.
7. One against one here, I am the utter victor—and against two. What can three do?
I strike against a multitude, like sheaves on a threshing floor. Do my rivals, who have no Indra, scorn me?
8. I restored Atithigva to the Guṅgus like a restorative, and I upheld the obstacle-overcomer among the clans,
when in the smashing of Parṇaya and in the smashing of Karañja, (as) in the great smashing of Vṛtra, I spread my fame.
9. Namī Sāpya came to the fore for me in order to enjoy restorative refreshment, and in the quest for cows he made partnerships (with me?) once again.
When I readied the arrow for him in the clashes, just then did I make him one to be praised and hymned.
10. Soma is visible in the one, (even) when it is within (him); the herdsman exposes the other by its absence.
Whoever tries to fight the sharp-horned bull remains bound within the thick (fetter) of deception.
11. I, the god of gods, do not violate the ordinances of the Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudriyas.
For auspicious power they have fashioned me—invincible, indestructible, unconquerable.

X.49 (875) Indra Vaikuṇṭha

Indra Vaikuṇṭha
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 2, 11

Like the preceding hymn (X.48), this is an *ātmastuti* or self-praise spoken by Indra, with relentless repetition of 1st-person singular pronouns and verbs. For the former, note that of the twenty half-verses (excluding the final summary verse 11), sixteen begin with *ahám* "I" and one with *mắm* "me." Only three (6c, 7c, and 10c) lack such an initial pronoun, and 7c has the enclitic *mā* "me" in second position (*yán mā*), while 10c begins with *spārhám*, a rhyme form to *ahám*.

As for verbs, the hymn is dominated by the injunctive, with nearly twenty such forms. This morphological skewing contrasts with the patterns in the preceding hymn, which has a wider range and more balanced selection of tenses and moods. The reasons for the prominence of the injunctive are not clear to us and, somewhat surprisingly, Hoffmann fails to treat this hymn systematically in his monograph on that verbal form (Hoffmann 1967).

Like X.48 this hymn particularly celebrates Indra's martial successes and the aid he gave various mortal clients in subduing their enemies. Several of these vignettes are little known, if at all, and others are quite obscurely phrased (e.g., vs. 3, though it treats the well-known saga of Kutsa, Śuṣṇa, and, probably, Uśanā Kāvya; vs. 6). The hymn also emphasizes, more than X.48, the importance of the sacrifice in strengthening Indra and securing his help: verse 1 announces this theme quite clearly, and verses 4–7 treat the relationship between sacrificer and Indra as well, though not as clearly.

The final verse (11) summarizes Indra's own speech, before addressing him directly and assuring him that the deeds he himself boasted of will also be praised by singers.

1. I gave the foremost good to the singer. I made the sacred formulation a strengthener for me.
   I became the inciter of the sacrificer. I have vanquished the non-sacrificers in every contest.
2. Upon me they conferred the name Indra among the gods—the creatures of heaven and earth and of the waters.
   I (took as my own) the two quick fallow bays, the bulls, who follow a separate commandment; boldly I took the mace for power.
3. I pierced the cloak for the poet with my thrusts; I helped Kutsa with this help:
   I, as the piercer of Śuṣṇa, held the deadly weapon—I, who did not give the Ārya name to the Dasyu.
4. I was like a father to the Vetasus for them to prevail; I made Tugra and Smadibha subject to Kutsa.
   I came to be under the direction of the sacrificer: when I brought myself to the fore for Tuji, his dear things were not to be assailed.

5. I made Mṛgaya subject to Śrutarvan, when he yielded to me when the ritual patterns were in due order.
   I made the vassal submissive for Āyu, and I made Paḍgṛbhi subject to Savya.
6. I am the one who (aided?) Navavāstva of the lofty chariots—I, the smasher of Vṛtra [/obstacles], shattered the Dāsa like obstacles [/Vṛtras]—
   when he [=Navavāstva] was causing (me) to grow strong and spread out according to due ritual order. I made the realms of light on the distant far shore of airy space.
7. I drive around with the swift (horses) of the Sun, being conveyed forth in my might by the Etaśas.
   When the soma-pressing of Manu says to me (that it [=soma] is) for my raiment, I will sideline (even) the effective Dāsa with my thrusts.
8. I am the smasher of the seven, a greater Nahus than Nahus. I made Turvaśa and Yadu to be famed through my power.
   I put down the one, his might with my might; I strengthened the nine and ninety (others) (to become) proud.
9. I, the bull, held fast the seven streams that were flowing and racing upon the earth.
   I of good resolve traverse the floods. Through fighting I found the way for Manu to seek.
10. I held fast in them that which the god Tvaṣṭar never held fast in them: the gleaming,
    eagerly sought (milk) in the udders, in the bellies of the cows, the honey of honey, the swelling soma, and its milk-mixture.
11. Thus in this way Indra sought to attract the gods and men to him; with his stirring (action) he be(stirred them)—the bounteous one whose generosity is real.
    All these (deeds) of yours do the powerful ones sing, you able master of the fallow bays, whose glory is your own.

X.50 (876) Indra Vaikuṇṭha

Indra Vaikuṇṭha
7 verses: jagatī 1–2, abhisāriṇī 3–4, triṣṭubh 5, jagatī 6–7

A much more conventional Indra hymn than the preceding two of this series (X.48–49). Here Indra is praised in the context and at the occasion of a soma sacrifice, and the usual reciprocal obligations of sacrificer and god are set forth.

1. Chant forth to the great one who finds exhilaration from the soma-stalk, who is common to all men and is present to all,
   to Indra, whose good-battling strength, great fame, and manliness the two world-halves respect.

2. And now he is praised by his comrade as manly and forceful: Indra is worthy of celebration for a man like me.
   Amid all the chariot-poles and at the getting of prizes, o master of settlements, or at an obstacle [/Vṛtra] or among the waters, you find exhilaration, o champion.
3. Who are those men, Indra, who are for your refreshment, who will strive to attain your favor as their traveling companion?
   Who spur themselves on for your lordly prize; who (spur themselves on) when waters, their own fields, or masculine power is at stake?
4. You will become great through our sacred formulation, Indra.
   You will become the worthy recipient of the sacrifice at all the soma-pressings.
   You will become the stirring of men in every contest and the supreme mantra, o you who are common to all domains.
5. Right now, as the superior one, help those eager for the sacrifice. The peoples know your great succor and protection.
   Right now, (so that) you will be unaging and you will make (us) strong, we have made all these soma-pressings powerful, to draw (you) here.
6. We have made all these soma-pressings powerful, to draw (you) here—which you have (now) taken into your own self, o son of strength.
   To your liking and for your support, are, in succession, the cup, the sacrifice, the mantra, and the upraised sacred formulation and speech.
7. Those who craft sacred formulations for you when the soma is pressed, for you to give of goods and of good, o inspired one,
   through the thought of your favor they will go forward along the path, at your exhilaration on the pressed soma-stalk.

The next three hymns (X.51–53), attributed to Agni Saucīka, treat the well-known story of the flight and disappearance of Agni, who wished to avoid the ritual role of conveying the oblations and the fate of his brothers. The gods find him hidden in the waters and entice him back by promising him a share in the sacrifice.

X.51 (877) Dialogue between Agni and the Gods

Agni Saucīka
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The classic dialogue between Agni and the gods (or one or more gods: he addresses Mitra and Varuṇa [vs. 2] and Varuṇa alone [vss. 4, 6]). Agni appears still to be in the waters (or just emerged), and the gods have only recently discovered his hiding place. The first question is which god spotted him (vss. 1–3). Agni then describes the fear that drove him from his sacrificial role, in responsive language that defines an omphalos (vss. 4, 6, esp. 4a and 6c). In the omphalos verse (5) the gods make the argument that Manu, a human and the first sacrificer, deserves to have his sacrifice completed by Agni's conveyance of the oblations. It is striking that the gods, perhaps disingenuously, do not argue for their own deserving state. In the last three verses (7–9) the gods propose rewards for Agni's returning to his task, and he accepts them.

1. [Gods:] Great was that caul and sturdy it was, enveloped in which you entered the waters.
   All your bodies in their multiple forms, o Agni Jātavedas, did a single god see.
2. [Agni:] Who saw me? Which one was that god who fully saw my bodies in their multiple forms?
   Where indeed, o Mitra and Varuṇa, are all the kindling sticks of Agni lying, which lead to the gods?
3. [Gods:] We sought you in multiple places, o Jātavedas, you who had entered into the waters, into the plants, o Agni.
   Yama espied you, o bright-beamed one, shining out farther than (a distance) of ten stages.
4. [Agni:] I went in fear of the Hotarship, Varuṇa, lest the gods yoke me to it.
   My bodies settled down in multiple places. I, Agni, do not attend to this business.
5. [Gods:] Come here! Manu, devoted to the gods, has desire for sacrifice, having properly prepared it. Yet you dwell in darkness, Agni.
   Make the paths leading to the gods easily passable. Convey the oblations, showing your benevolence.
6. [Agni:] The brothers of Agni earlier kept rolling along after this business, like a charioteer along the road.
   In fear of this, Varuṇa, I went far away. I flinched from it like a buffalo from the bowstring of an archer.
7. [Gods:] We will make a lifetime for you, which is free from old age, Agni, so that yoked (to your task) you will not suffer harm, Jātavedas.
   Then will you, showing your benevolence, convey their portion of the oblation to the gods, o well-born one?
8. [Agni:] Give the fore-offerings and the after-offerings exclusively to me, the nourishing portion of the oblation,
   and the "ghee" of the waters and the "man" of the plants, and let there be a long lifetime for Agni, o gods.
9. [Gods:] Yours be the fore-offerings and the after-offerings exclusively, the nourishing portions of the oblation;
   yours, Agni, be this whole sacrifice. To you let the four quarters bow.

X.52 (878) Address to the Gods from Agni

Agni Saucīka
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn logically follows the preceding one. Agni has agreed to accept the Hotarship, which he had originally fled. He ceremonially requests guidance from the gods about how to perform his new duties in verses 1–2.

The middle verse (3) seems not to be spoken by Agni, but rather by a mortal attending or officiating at the sacrifice and catching sight of the newly installed Agni. In the first half of the verse he expresses some anxiety about this fire's connection to Yama; at issue is the possible confusion between, or identity of, the new ritual fire with the cremation fire, which conveys the dead to Yama's realm. (Similar anxiety is treated in the funeral hymns, especially X.16.) Reassurance seems to be dispensed in the second half of the verse; it may be (following Lanman 1884: 388) that the daily rebirth is that of the Agnihotra fire, while the monthly rebirth is for the Śrāddha, or ceremony in honor of the dead—allowing separation of the two fires and their functions.

In verses 4–5 Agni quotes the gods' words as they install him (4cd), and promises to fulfill his duties in exemplary fashion. The final verse (6) sums up the gods' installation of Agni.

1. [Agni:] All you gods, instruct me how, chosen here as Hotar, I shall conceive it [=task] upon being installed.
   Proclaim to me how, by what path I shall convey your share, your oblation to you.
2. [Agni:] I have sat down as the better sacrificing Hotar. All the gods, the Maruts spur me on.
   Every day, o Aśvins, the Adhvaryu-ship is yours. The kindling stick becomes the Formulator; this is the poured offering for you two.
3. [Sacificer?:] This one here who is the Hotar—who is he to Yama? Whom am I calling upon when the gods anoint (him)?
   Every day he is born, every month. And so the gods have installed him as conveyor of the oblation.
4. [Agni:] The gods have installed me as conveyor of the oblation—I who had slipped away, undergoing many troubles:
   "Agni, the knowing one, will arrange the sacrifice for us, with its five courses, three turns, seven threads."
5. [Agni:] Through sacrifice I will win you immortality rich in heroes, so that I can make wide space for you, o gods.
   Might I place the mace in Indra's arms. Then he will win all these battles.
6. [Poet:] Three hundred, three thousand, and thirty-nine gods revered Agni.
   They sprinkled him with ghee; they strewed the ritual grass for him. Just after that they installed him as Hotar.

X.53 (879) Agni ["Opferlied"]

Agni Saucīka
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6–7, 9–11

This hymn begins from the situation depicted in the last two hymns, but turns into a mystical meditation on the sacrifice. The first three verses are apparently spoken by mortal sacrificers, who have installed the recovered Agni as Hotar and are pleased (vs. 3) with the resulting success of their sacrifice.

In verses 4–5 Agni responds, inviting both gods and men to take pleasure in his application to this ritual role. Verse 4 also contains one of the few Ṛgvedic references to the enmity between the gods (Devas) and the Asuras. Although this persistent rivalry dominates middle Vedic mythology, it only begins, very tentatively, to appear in the late Ṛgveda, to which period this hymn belongs.

The next three verses (6–8) are again the speech of human priests, addressed both to Agni and to fellow celebrants, urging them to carry on the ritual work. In verse 7 the sacrifice, as often, is metaphorically identified with a chariot, and the puzzling beginning of verse 8 may refer metaphorically to a river crossing, taking the sacrificers to a better state.

The most enigmatic verses of the hymn are the last three (9–11), in jagatī meter (as opposed to the prevalent, but not ubiquitous triṣṭubh). They begin with the god Tvaṣṭar, the "Fashioner" of the gods: he has fashioned drinking cups for the gods, and now sharpens a hatchet for Brahmaṇaspati to use. Since Brahmaṇaspati has a transparent name, "Lord of the Sacred Formulation," he is almost surely going to use the hatchet to hew a sacred formulation, the mystical verbal embodiment of cosmic truth. In verse 10 the poets are urged to use the same types of tools, presumably to fashion the same things: sacred formulations. Or, in another common metaphor, to create "hidden tracks" (that is, mystical verbal compositions). Verse 11 may be an example of such a hidden track: it is certainly impenetrable enough, with riddling and paradoxical images that several millennia of study have not solved.

1. The one whom we sought with our mind, this one has come here just now, knowing the sacrifice, attentive to its articulation.
   He will perform sacrifice for us in the divine assemblage as superior sacrificer, for he will sit down (as Hotar) close by, in front of us.
2. He has been realized as Hotar, as superior sacrificer by his installation. Since he watches over the well-placed pleasurable offerings,
   we shall sacrifice to the gods deserving the sacrifice—yes! We will reverently salute those worthy of salutation with ghee.
3. He has made our pursuit of the gods successful today. We found the tongue of the sacrifice in hiding.
   He has come here, sweet smelling, clothing himself in life. He has made our invocation of the gods fortunate today.

4. [Agni:] Might I today devise this as the foremost of speech, by which we gods will overcome the Asuras.
   You nourishment eaters and you worthy of the sacrifice, you five peoples, take pleasure in my Hotarship.
5. [Agni:] Let the five peoples take pleasure in my Hotarship—and the cow-born and those who are worthy of the sacrifice.
   Let Earth protect us from earthly constraint; let the Midspace protect us from heavenly (constraint).
6. Stretching the thread (of the sacrifice), (o Agni,) go following the radiance of the airy realm. Protect the paths of light made by insightful thought.
   (You priests,) weave a work without knots for the ever-praising ones. Become Manu, (o Agni). Generate the divine race.
7. Bind the axle-straps, you comrades in soma [=priests], and set the reins in order, and ornament (the chariot).
   Drive the eight-seated chariot all about, the one with which the gods led a dear thing to (us?).
8. The stony (stream) is flowing. Pull yourselves together! Stand up! Advance, comrades!
   There let us leave behind those who were unfriendly. Might we cross over and upward to friendly ones, to prizes.
9. Tvaṣṭar knew (his own) magic powers, as the best worker of workers, bearing the cups, the most beneficial drinking vessels of the gods.
   Now he sharpens the hatchet of good metal, with which the "(chariot-) steed," Brahmaṇaspati, will hew.
10. Now, poets, sharpen up (the hatchets) that are (here), the axes with which you carve for the immortal.
    As knowing ones, create hidden tracks, (like the track) by which the gods achieved immortality.
11. They have placed the "maiden" in the embryo [=Agni?], have placed the "calf" in his mouth, with cryptic mind and tongue.
    He, always benevolent, eager to gain, with the yoking strings wins the victory just at the decisive moment.

The next three hymns (54–56) are attributed to Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya.

X.54 (880) Indra

Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This short hymn begins by announcing (somewhat cryptically) that Indra's fame or reputation is what prompted a frantic call on him from Heaven and Earth (vs. 1cd), and it ends (6cd) with the poet's summation of his own praise hymn. In between there is both standard praise of Indra's well-known deeds (e.g., vss. 1cd, 3) and more ambiguously phrased assessment of his accomplishments. In verse 2bc, for example, Indra's victories seem almost dismissively characterized as a magic trick (*māyā́*, the word later famously used of the "illusion" of reality) produced by his own boasts. The four names of Indra in verse 4 are presumably his famous epithets, such as *vṛtrahán* "Vṛtra-smasher," but the poet also seems to be slyly implying that Indra's deeds are reducible to words. These deprecatory hints are slight and could be otherwise interpreted, but in any case the poet has avoided a conventional recital of Indra's exploits. Instead he seems to be saying that Indra's great deeds and the words that express them are essentially the same: his reputation is equivalent to himself (vs. 1ab); his own proclamation of his powers is taken by the world as identical to "battles" (vs. 2); his epithets are the power that produces his deeds (vs. 4). Although this poetic ploy is, in one sense, the usual message that mortals' praises strengthen Indra for his deeds, the poet here seems to be claiming something more: that the poet's formulations are Indra's essence.

In the very last pāda of the hymn the poet seems to be doing something similar with his own name Bṛhaduktha ("having/producing lofty speech"), as Jesse Lundquist has suggested to me (personal communication). The pāda (6d) reads *brahmakṛ́to bṛhádukthād avāci* ("...has been spoken...from Bṛhaduktha, the crafter of sacred formulations"), with his name positioned between the other two words in the line. The first half of his name, *bṛhát*, is a close phonological match to the first half of the first word, *brahma* "sacred formulation"; the last half of his name, *uktha* "(solemn) speech," is etymologically related to the verb *avāci*. Thus his very name can be, as it were, transformed into the verbal products that are his reason for being.

1. It was to your reputation in its greatness, o bounteous one, that the two frightened world-halves called upon you.
   You furthered the gods, you overcame the Dāsa might, as you did your best for the other progeny, Indra.
2. When you roamed, having grown strong in body, proclaiming your own powers among the peoples, o Indra,
   that was just your magic trick, which they call battles: neither today nor before have you discovered a rival.
3. What seers before us have reached the end of your whole greatness, in that you begot your mother and father [=Heaven and Earth] at the same time from your own body?
4. There exist four lordly names for you, the unfalsifiable names of the buffalo.
   You surely know all these, through which you have done your deeds, o bounteous one.
5. You have made those good things yours alone, both those in the open and those that are hidden.
   Do not pass over my desire, bounteous one: you are the one who takes heed and gives, Indra,

6. Who placed light within the light, who joined the honeys with the honey.
So, a dear fortifying thought has been spoken to Indra from
Bṛhaduktha, the crafter of sacred formulations.

X.55 (881) Indra [or the All Gods?]

Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

A puzzling and enigmatic hymn, with close ties to the previous hymn, especially at the beginning. The first puzzle is that this, the second of the three Bṛhaduktha hymns (X.54–56), is assigned Indra as its deity in the Anukramaṇī, but is longer (eight verses) than the previous hymn (X.54, six verses), which is also dedicated to Indra. Bergaigne (per Oldenberg 1888: 226) suggests that the ascription is incorrect, and that this is really an All God hymn, as is the next one (X.56, seven verses). Although Oldenberg rejected this suggestion (1888: 238–39) on grounds of content, we are inclined to accept it. Although Indra is the clear or likely deity of most of the verses (1–3, 7–8), the center part of the hymn (vss. 4–6) is not, in our view, Indraic. Moreover, the numerology (see esp. vss. 2–3, 5) and the riddling phraseology throughout, without expressed referents, are quite reminiscent of a certain type of speculative All God hymn.

The first verse of the hymn exactly matches that of X.54 in structure (with X.55.1 somewhat clearer syntactically), and their second pādas are almost identical. Both concern the call that Heaven and Earth issued to Indra in fright, and go on, in the second hemistich, to recount other of Indra's deeds. And this verse also takes up the theme of the "hidden name" found also in X.54.4. But already in X.55.1 we meet an unidentified referent: "the sons of your (or a?) brother," especially puzzling because, as far as we know, Indra has no brother.

The name theme continues in verse 2, but introduces a light, into which five unidentified dear ones merge. Nothing further is made of this merger, but the same lexeme "merge into" (*sáṃ √viś*) is used in the next hymn (X.55.1) for the merger of the body of the dead with light in some unspecified distant place, and it seems likely that our passage touches on the same theme of death and transfiguration. Though verse 3 begins with a conventional deed of Indra, filling the world-halves, it pursues both the numerology of verse 2 and the light, now both fragmented and unified. Although various identifications of the referents here have been proposed, none is entirely convincing; moreover, the poet seems more interested in keeping us guessing than in providing a clear roadmap.

What does seem clear is that the cosmic context of Heaven and Earth and the focus on light(s) have led us to astronomical imagery, which occupies the next three verses of the hymn. We begin (vs. 4) with Dawn, explicitly identified, and celebrated in a formulaic final pāda that is modeled on the refrain of a famous mystical All God hymn,

III.55, where the "one and only lordship" is that of the gods. The next verse (5) has no identified referents at all, and the language is difficult and cryptic. Nonetheless it seems to refer to the moon traveling among the stars, until swallowed up by a gray one—perhaps the gray twilight of dawn or the smoke of the ritual fire kindled at dawn. The poet seems to recognize the hyper-"poetic" quality of this description (5c) and provides a simply phrased (though not simply interpreted) gloss in pāda d. Verse 6 is most easily interpretable as referring to the sun, who is called a "ruddy eagle" elsewhere in the Ṛgveda, but it could also be Agni or Indra; if the latter, it provides a transition to the final two verses (7–8), which belong more clearly to Indra.

1. Far away in the distance is that hidden name which the two, frightened, called you, to grant them vigor.
You propped up Earth and Heaven at the critical moment, when you were sparking the sons of your brother, bounteous one.
2. Great is that hidden, much-coveted name by which you begat what has been and by which (you will beget) what is to be.
The light born of old that is his—that dear light do the five dear ones merge into.
3. He filled the two world-halves and their middle. The five (groups of) gods in their proper sequence, seven by seven,
does he survey with the thirty-four (lights) in their multiplicity, (which are one) light having a single form but following various commandments.
4. In that, o Dawn, you dawned as the foremost of the radiant ones, because you begat the thriving of the thriving,
in that you have nearer kinship with the more distant (Dawn)—great is the one and only lordship of great (Dawn).
5. The solitary (moon?) running in the crowd of many (stars?)—though he was young, the gray one swallowed him—
behold the poetic skill of the god in his greatness. (In simple language:) today he died; yesterday he was (still) utterly breathing.
6. Through his power he is the powerful, ruddy eagle, who, as the nestless champion from of old, (has power) over the great.
What he perceives, that is truly real, not false. He is both the winner and the giver of the eagerly sought good.
7. He acquired his bullish manly powers through these, through whom the mace-bearer grew strong for the Vṛtra-smashing,
the gods who, because of the greatness of the deed being done, came into being without (their own) doing.
8. Giving rise to his deeds with (them as his?) yokemate, he who possesses all might and all mind, the smiter of taunts, the overcomer of the powerful,
having drunk of the soma, having grown strong, the champion blew the Dasyus forth from heaven in battle.

X.56 (881) All Gods

Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
7 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, 7; jagatī 4–6

Traditionally this hymn was interpreted as Bṛhaduktha's funeral hymn for his son Vājin (the name extracted from *vājín-* "prizewinner" in vss. 2–3). More recently it has been taken as the funeral hymn for a horse, either the horse sacrificed in the Aśvamedha (Oldenberg) or simply a particularly distinguished racehorse (Geldner). We find all these interpretations unduly restrictive. Though it is undoubtedly a funeral hymn, or, to be more general, undoubtedly refers to what happens after death, there are no particularly equine features in it, since *vājín* can be used of humans and gods as well as horses. Nor is there any trace of the personal grief a poet might express for his son. Instead the hymn has taken some of the cosmic speculation of the last hymn (esp. X.55.2) and directed it to the more focused topic of the afterlife.

The first two verses urge the dead to merge his body with a light in an unspecified but very distant place, presumably even beyond heavenly lights like the sun, but associated with the gods. This merger is considered a kind of birth (see vs. 1d). The distance traveled on this good journey is treated in verse 3.

The meter changes in the next three verses (4–6) and so, to some extent, does the topic. Verse 4 is quite unclear and quite disputed, in part because the referent of the pronoun "their" (*eṣām*) is not specified. In our opinion the verse asserts that the ancestors ("forefathers") do not control the fate of the recently dead: "their" greatness (i.e., that of the recently dead) is not in the power of their predecessors, the ancestors (4a); rather, the gods transfer the mental spirit of the dead to the realm of the gods (4b), where they, the dead, incorporate animating motion (4c) and re-enter their bodies (4d). In other words, the verse is an attempt to describe the mechanism whereby the dead regain their bodies, joining mental power with physical activity within the envelope of the old body. As such, it is more detailed than the simple, reassuring command to the dead in the funeral hymn X.14.8 "Unite with your body in your full luster," which gives no directions as to how to go about it.

The happy result of this heavenly reincarnation is expressed in the first half of verse 5, but in the second half a more certain, because more visible, means to life after death is depicted—the familiar one of extending one's own life in the lives of one's progeny. This Ṛgvedic truism is, in our view, developed in the following very difficult verse (6) in two complementary ways. On the one hand, sons can make their "lord" (in our view, their father) into a "finder of the sun"—here we take "sun" to be equivalent to the light in verse 1, with which the dead are to merge—in two ways. The father can merge with the highest light by being provided with a proper funeral, and he can have further life on earth, continue to see the sun, as it were, by being propagated in his children and grandchildren. Viewed from the opposite direction, the forefathers, already in the heavenly afterlife, established their paternal dominion by placing descendants in later generations.

The final verse, returning to triṣṭubh meter, simply sums up in simpler language Bṛhaduktha's understanding of this process. For a more detailed interpretation of this hymn as a funeral hymn, see Brereton (forthcoming a).

1. Here is one (light) of yours, and far away is another one. Merge with the third light.
   At the merging of your body, be one cherished and dear to the gods at this highest means of begetting.
2. Let your body, o prizewinner, leading the body, establish a thing of value for us and protection for you.
   Unswerving, in order to uphold the great gods, you should exchange your own light as if for the light in heaven.
3. You are the prizewinner with a winning spirit. You are well gone to the (dawns?), the good trackers, well gone to the praise, well gone to heaven,
   well gone according to the foremost foundations that hold true, well gone to the gods, well gone along your flight.
4. Even the forefathers are not masters of their greatness. The gods placed their mental force among the gods,
   and they enveloped those things that were in vibrant motion. They entered into their bodies again.
5. With their powers they strode around the whole airy realm, measuring the ancient, unmeasurable domains.
   All living beings are held down within their bodies, but they have extended themselves multiply through their offspring.
6. Sons set up their lord [=father] as a finder of the sun in two ways by a third action.
   And their forefathers have established their own offspring as their paternal power, as their "stretched thread" among the later generations.
7. As if with a boat across the swell through all the earth's directions, (having gone) beyond the difficult places with blessings,
   Bṛhaduktha by his greatness has placed his own offspring both among later ones and among those previous.

After the sequence of hymn trios beginning with X.39, the next group (57–60), of four hymns, seems out of place, but Oldenberg (1888: 236) suggests that the whole has been arbitrarily divided into four hymns and could conceivably be resolved into three. The hymns share a theme—that of healing and returning to life—and are ascribed to "the four Gaupāyanas." Perhaps the division into four hymns was suggested by the four supposed authors.

X.57 (883) All Gods

Bandhu, Subandhu, Śrutabandhu, and Viprabandhu, the four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas
6 verses: gāyatrī

On its surface this hymn contains a simple revivifying spell seeking the return of "mind" to a person or persons in some distress—prefaced by two verses seeking to avoid ritual wrongdoing and to attain the help of Agni. This hymn is closely linked with X.58, a patterned litany calling for the return of mind. In both, "mind" has a broader semantic range than it generally does in English, encompassing not merely thought and mental processes, but what we might want to term "spirit."

Traditionally this hymn and the following three (X.57–60) are considered the poetic representations of an itihāsa (traditional explanatory story) concerning the king Asamāti, who dismissed his purohitas (house-priests), the four Gaupāyanas (supposedly the poets of these very hymns), and hired several Asuras instead. The latter deprived one of the Gaupāyanas, Subandhu, of his life, and in this hymn the three remaining brothers call his mind to return. The anachronistic details in this story—the king's house-priest, the evil nature of Asuras—mark it as a secondary confection, invented for or adapted to hymns composed for other purposes.

1. Let us not depart from the path, nor from the sacrifice of the one who has soma, Indra.
   Let hostilities not stand between us.
2. He who assures the success of the sacrifice, who is the thread stretched to the gods,
   him [=Agni], bepoured, might we attain.
3. We now call mind hither, with soma dedicated to Naraśaṃsa
   and with the composed thoughts of our forefathers.
4. Let your mind come here again, for will, for skill, for life,
   and to see the sun for a long time.
5. O fathers, let the divine race give us mind again.
   May we keep company with the troop of the living.
6. Under your commandment, o Soma, bearing mind in our bodies,
   may we, along with our offspring, keep company with it.

X.58 (884) The Return of Mind (Manaāvartaṇam)

The four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas (as for X.57)
12 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn is a continuation of X.57, the spell to bring the return of "mind" to a dead or dying person. But the monotonous patterned repetition in this piece contrasts with the varied ways in which X.57 seeks the return of mind. In fact, we might consider this the performative verbal material, the incantation itself, referred to in X.57.3 "we now call mind hither."

The structure is simple: each verse envisions a distant location where mind may have gone, and calls for it to return from that place. The first verse is perhaps the most crucial, for Yama is the ruler of the dead, and if mind has gone there, the person in question has presumably died. Yama's realm is also probably alluded to in the middle verse (6): the first verse of the Yama hymn, the first funeral hymn (X.14.1), refers to Yama as the one "who has departed along the great slopes," using the same word, *pravát*, as here. The other destinations are generally features of heaven or of earth; the range seems like an elaborated version of the disposition of the body and its parts in the funeral verse X.16.3 "Let your eye go to the sun, your life-breath to the wind. Go to heaven and to earth as is fitting. Or go to the waters, if it has been fixed for you there. Take your stand in the plants with your limbs," and it is also reminiscent of similar dispositions of the body in the Upaniṣads.

1. If your mind has gone to Yama Vaivasvata far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
2. If your mind has gone to heaven, if to earth far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
3. If your mind has gone to the four-cornered land far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
4. If your mind has gone to the four quarters far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
5. If your mind has gone to the flooding sea far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
6. If your mind has gone to the light-beams, the sloping paths (to Yama) far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
7. If your mind has gone to the waters, if to the plants far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
8. If your mind has gone to the sun, if to the dawn far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
9. If your mind has gone to the lofty mountains far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
10. If your mind has gone to this whole moving world far away,
    we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
11. If your mind has gone to the distant distances far away,
    we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
12. If your mind has gone to what has been and what will be far away,
    we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.

X.59 (885) Nirṛti (1–3), Nirṛti and Soma (4), Asunīti (5–6), Assorted Divinities (7), Heaven and Earth (8–10), or Indra (10a)

The four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas (as for X.57)
10 verses: triṣṭubh, except paṅkti 8, mahāpaṅkti 9, paṅktyuttarā 10

Although the themes in this hymn conform to the healing and restorative tone of the other Gaupāyana hymns, neither the structure of the hymn nor the particular application of the verses is entirely clear. Geldner treats it as a unified composition, with verses 1–3 and 8–10 wishing long life and health to Subandhu, and the middle verses 4–7 extending these wishes to other beings.

But structural considerations call this view into question. For one thing, Subandhu is mentioned only in the last part of the hymn (vs. 8), not the first. Moreover, the first four verses are marked by an apotropaic refrain addressed to Nirṛti "Dissolution" and should be considered as a group. The first of these verses does concern the restoration or lengthening of the lifetime of an unnamed person, compared to the Aśvins' mythical restoration to youth of Cyavāna; the last of the verses (4) is a conventional prayer to avoid death and attain old age. The two middle verses (2–3) lie further from the theme of restored life, treating success in sacrifice (2) and in combat (3).

The next two verses (5–6) are addressed to Asunīti "the leader to (the other) life," a word found also in the funeral hymns (X.12.4, 15.14, 16.2), calling for the restoration not only of mind (vs. 5a), the concern of X.57–58, but also of other senses and powers. The following verse (7), in the same meter, invokes other gods to join in this restoration.

The final three verses (8–10) are in different, but related meters (variants of paṅkti, assemblages of eight-syllable lines), and share a three-pāda refrain. The first two (8–9) call on Heaven and Earth to provide remedies and remove maladies; the last (10), outside of its refrain, is completely opaque: Indra is asked to "restore the... ox that drew the wedding-cart of Uśīnarāṇī," a female figure appearing nowhere else in the Ṛgveda, or indeed in Sanskrit (though the masculine *uśīnara* is found as the name of a people in middle Vedic and later) and whose relevance here cannot be fathomed—efforts to do so only demonstrating the ingenuity, but not necessarily the good sense, of the scholars who proposed them.

1. His lifetime has been extended further anew, as the two mounters of the chariot [=Aśvins] (extended) the lifetime (of Cyavāna) with their resolute (power/speech).
   And then (like) Cyavāna he applies his force to his task. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.
2. When the sāman (is sung), for wealth we shall equip ourselves with food affording treasures (of honey) and with measures of fame in quantity.
   Let the singer rejoice in all these of ours. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.

3. May we surmount (the manly powers) of the stranger with our manly powers, as Heaven does Earth, as the mountains the plains.
   The singer perceives all these of ours. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.
4. Do not hand us over to death, Soma. May we now look upon the sun as it rises.
   Throughout the days let our old age be secured for us. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.
5. You leader to (the other) life, keep our mind firm in us. Lengthen our lifetime, for living.
   Find pleasure in our seeing the sun; strengthen your own body with ghee.
6. You leader to the (other) life, again put sight in us, again breath in us here, for our use.
   For a long time may we look upon the sun as it rises. O Concord, be gracious to us with well-being.
7. Again let Earth give us life-force, again let goddess Heaven, again Midspace.
   Again let Soma give us our body, again let Pūṣan give us the path that is well-being.
8. (Let) the two world-halves (be) luck for the one of good lineage [/Subandhu], the two youthfully exuberant mothers of truth.
   – Let the two bear away whatever malady there is. O Heaven and Earth, to ground (let) malady (go). Let nothing whatsoever plague (him).
9. Down come the pair, down the trio—down the remedies from heaven. To ground is the single (remedy) coming.
   – Let the two bear away what(ever) malady there is. O Heaven and Earth, to ground (let) malady (go). Let nothing whatsoever plague (him).
10. Indra, restore the cart-drawing ox that drew the (wedding-)cart of Uśīnarāṇī hither.
    – Let the two bear away what(ever) malady there is. O Heaven and Earth, to ground (let) malady (go). Let nothing whatsoever plague (him).

X.60 (886) Asamāti (1–4, 6), Indra (5), Spell to Heal Subandhu (7–11), Praise of the Hand (12)

The four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas (as for X.57)
12 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–5, anuṣṭubh 6–7, paṅkti 8–9, anuṣṭubh 10–12

Another hymn that invites decomposition. The first six verses are a sort of praśasti or royal encomium of Asamāti; indeed, the first four form a single sentence. There

is no obvious connection to the themes of healing and restoration to life found in the other Gaupāyana hymns, and one can see how the lack of thematic integration invited the explanatory itihāsa (see introduction to X.57) that provides a tale relating King Asamāti to the suffering Subandhu.

The second part of the hymn (vss. 7–12) is a spell to heal Subandhu and restore his mind. It first recalls him to life (vs. 7), then provides models from the constructed and natural worlds (vss. 8 and 9 respectively) for securing Subandhu's mind within him. The return of his mind is announced in verse 10, while his sickness is banished in verse 11, again with models from the natural world. Finally the healing hand is praised in verse 12. Thus, this final segment of the Gaupāyana collection returns us to the first two hymns, X.57–58, and their concentration on the return of the mind of a sick person. Note especially that the first verse of X.58, which envisions the departure of his mind to Yama Vaivasvata in the realm of the dead, is triumphantly completed here by verse 10, "I have brought the mind of Subandhu here from Yama Vaivasvata."

1. To the man of the Māhīnas, with glittering appearance, approached with praise,
   we have come, bearing homage—
2. To Asamāti [/the incomparable], the lavishly overflowing, glittering, downward coursing chariot,
   master of settlements of Bhajeratha,
3. Who dominated the peoples like buffaloes, both those with metal weapons
   and those without, in battle,
4. Under whose commandment Ikṣvāku, the wealthy possessor of grain-stores, is radiant
   like (the sun) in heaven, (as are) the five peoples.
5. O Indra, uphold the lordly powers in the Asamātis, the Rathaproṣṭhas,
   to be seen like the sun in heaven.
6. For the descendants of Agastya you yoke a ruddy paired team.
   You have trodden down the niggards, trodden on all the ungenerous ones, o king.
7. Here is the mother, here the father; here a means of life will come.
   Here is a way to slither forth for you. Subandhu, come here, come out!
8. Just as they tie a yoke with a strap to make it fast,
   even so does he hold fast your mind, for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.
9. Just as this great earth holds fast these trees here,
   even so does he hold fast your mind, for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.
10. I brought the mind of Subandhu here from Yama Vaivasvata,
    for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.

11. Downward does the wind blow; downward the sun gives heat.
    The cow gives milk that goes downward; downward let your malady go.
12. Here is my hand that brings good fortune; here is my (other hand) bringing better fortune.
    Here is my all-healing one; here the one of propitious touch.

The next twenty-four hymns, X.61–84, are paired hymns, generally attributed to the same poet and showing signs of internal connection.

The first pair (61–62) are the Nābhānediṣṭha hymns to the All Gods, the first devilishly complex, the second far less so.

X.61 (887) All Gods

Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava
27 verses: triṣṭubh

The near impenetrability of this hymn with all its poetic tricks and semantic evasions produces a certain despair in the translator, and it is no wonder that even sensible and thoughtful interpreters have clearly gone astray—as, no doubt, have the present ones. Much of what follows is tentative and provisional, but we have attempted to give an interpretation that is internally consistent and depends as little as possible on outside and post-Ṛgvedic materials.

This hymn and the next one are attributed by the Anukramaṇī to Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava. Although the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa contains a story about Nābhānediṣṭha (AiB V.14), it is generally agreed that this later tale has little to do with this hymn and cannot explain its mysteries. We would go further and suggest that the supposed poet's name has simply been extracted from verse 18, where it is, in our view, the name or epithet of a different participant. We are inclined to ascribe the hymn rather to Kakṣīvant, the crafty poet of I.116–126, or a descendant or would-be epigone of his: Kakṣīvant is mentioned in verse 16, and the hymn has certain connections with Kakṣīvant's oeuvre, especially I.121.

The hymn consists of several different sections, but we believe that these are all linked through the dawn sacrifice and the participants therein, particularly Dawn herself, Agni, the Aśvins, and Indra. Two mythological sections treat different myths about Dawn, and these are sandwiched between sections apparently depicting and meditating upon an early-morning sacrifice and the dakṣiṇās, or priestly gifts, distributed there.

The first four verses concern a man called Tūrvayāṇa, who in a verbal contest produces a supremely effective verbal formulation, which brings the Aśvins to the sacrifice and which also prompts liberal gifts to himself and which rescues or otherwise provides help to his parents and priests. His effective speech is contrasted with that of Cyavāna (a client of the Aśvins in other circumstances), who produces

only "sweet dregs" (vs. 2), while Tūrvayāṇa's speech is likened to gushing semen. His invocation to the Aśvins is given verbatim in verse 4.

The next four verses treat the shocking story of Heaven's incest with his daughter, Dawn. This is a favorite myth of the middle Vedic period (see Jamison 1991: 294–96), but nowhere is it as graphically, if fragmentarily, treated as it is here. She finally escapes (vs. 8), but before this happens, some of his semen is spilled on the ground (vs. 7), indeed on the ritual ground (vs. 6). From this semen the ritual fire is fashioned (vss. 7 and 9). Thus, though the rape of Heaven's daughter is depicted as brutal, it results in the creation of the central ritual substance—as so often, around the world, in myths of cosmic rape and incest the taboo sexual encounter is primally creative. It seems likely that the comparison of Tūrvayāṇa's verbal production with semen, in conjunction with the overall theme of dawn sacrifice, prompted the telling of this story in just this place.

Verse 9 and the birth of fire form the transition to the next mythological section, the freeing of Dawn from the Vala cave by the Aṅgirases and Navagvas (vss. 9–13). Verses 9–11 all begin "right away" (*makṣū́*). As noted, verse 9 treats the newly created fire. In verse 10 (at least in our reading of it) the Navagvas attempt to free Dawn from her "protector," the Vala cave. In verse 11 the mythic motifs of the Dawn cow and her milk and of Agni, the product of Heaven's semen, are brought together—the motifs that are sacrificially found together in the dawn sacrifice. The Aṅgiras story is continued in the two following verses (12–13), though the dramatic high point has already been reached.

The subject changes abruptly with the next verses (14–15), back to the ritual fire and the sacrifice to which the Aśvins will come. There then follows a section that has led many commentators (see especially Oldenberg and Geldner) to construct elaborate family trees and "back-stories" for the poet, who is supposed to be seeking either a new, adoptive father (Geldner) or a new varṇa (Oldenberg). In our view these ingenious constructions are unnecessary and misguided. Instead the poet, perhaps Kakṣīvant (16c), is presenting his *patron* with what appears at first to be a praśasti, an encomium, but which then gently mocks him for his pretentions and for perceived stinginess. Verse 16 is a fine straightforward piece of praise, attributing grand titles and qualities to the king, in our view the poet's patron. Verse 17 is more equivocal. The king, the sacrificer, is "of two lineages": this is the term that provoked the family-tree constructions of Oldenberg and Geldner. We think rather that the poet is suggesting that the king is kin to both the human and divine races—or that the king so believes (see the next verse). But the poet also says that the king ought to milk the cow that yields sap but does not give birth—which may be an allusion to the king's slowness to produce dakṣiṇās for his poet, who points out in the second half of the verse that he himself is doing his job in producing poetry. Verse 18 seems to us to embody the pretensions of the patron-king. His name or epithet is Nābhānediṣṭha, "nearest to the navel": "navel" is a standard metaphor for origin and close kinship (especially the point of origin of two disparate groups), as well as for the focal point of the

sacrifice or indeed the world itself. (This epithet must be very old, as the same word is found in Younger Avestan *nabānazdišta* "closely related, next of kin.") And in the second half of the verse he wonders aloud how high his "navel" is, relative to an unidentified other, then boasts of the unbroken chain of generations that links him to the original navel. He gets his comeuppance in the next verse (19), where the god Agni lays claim to the real navel, the gods, the two births, and the cow and her products.

With the patron put in his place, the hymn now turns to a depiction of the dawn sacrifice, or rather its conclusion, in five verses (20–24), each beginning with the word *ádha* "(and) now." The dakṣiṇās are now properly given (see 21ab), and the poet therefore calls on the gods for honor and protection for the patrons (vss. 22–23). In the final verse of this sequence (24) the poet and his colleagues appear to be poised to express their final prayers (24b), prayers found in the final verse (27). In between are two verses (25–26) that ascribe "good lineage" to an unidentified subject, who both takes pleasure in a praise hymn and performs ritual service. The "good lineage" reminds us of the patron's claims to distinguished kinship earlier in the hymn, which were trumped by the god Agni. In these two verses we believe that the poet deliberately left the subject unidentified and that he meant the verses to be read with both Agni and himself (the poet) as potential subjects, thus associating himself with the fine family and divine relations that the patron craved.

Needless to say, this is a very speculative reading of the poem, and many details remain unaccounted for. It is to be hoped that further progress can be made in its interpretation, within a Ṛgvedic context.

1. Here is a Rudrian formulation right to the point, (which) he whose
   speech is welcome (produced) with his mental force at a contest
   in skill,
   (a formulation) that, standing ready for liberality, will effectively guide
   across his two parents and, on the fifth [?] day, the seven Hotars.
2. Just he, as the winner (at the contest), (stands ready) for the man who
   can be outwitted to give: Cyavāna measured out his altar with "sweet"
   (dregs),
   but Tūrvayāṇa, whose speech is the most welcome, poured enduring
   semen like a gush—
3. (Tūrvayāṇa)—to whose invocations you two [=Aśvins] run and win
   inspired words, (produced) by his skill, that are like sharp thinking,
   he who, powerfully manly, with arrows in his hand, brought his aim to
   fulfillment.
4. "When black (Night) is sitting among the ruddy cows (of Dawn), o
   Aśvins, I call upon you two, the sons of heaven.
   Pursue my sacrifice, come here to my food, like winners to refreshment,
   as the two of whom no deception can be remembered."

5. He whose (penis,) which performs the virile work, stretched out,
discharging (the semen)—(that one,) the manly one, then pulled away
(his penis, which had been) "attending on" (her).
Again he tears out from the maiden, his daughter, what had been
"brought to bear" on her—he the unassailable.
6. When what was to be done was at its middle, at the encounter when the
father was making love to the young girl—
as they were going apart, the two left behind a little semen sprinkled
down on the back and in the womb of the well-performed (sacrifice).
7. When the father "sprang on" his own daughter, he, uniting (with her),
poured down his semen upon the earth.
The gods, very concerned, begat the sacred formulation, and they
fashioned out (of it?) the Lord of the Dwelling Place, protector of
commandments.
8. Like a bull in a contest he threw off foam. Heedless, she went away,
hither and yon.
Twisting away, she hastened like the Gift-Cow on foot. [The father:]
"Now those caresses of mine have not grasped (her)."

9. Right away, like a chariot-horse (came) the trampling of the offspring
[=Agni], and he took his seat at the udder, as one naked in the cold
takes a seat close to the fire.
He gained the kindling wood and he gained the prize; he was born as
the upholder, ever doing battle with his strength.
10. Right away the Navagvas came to the fellowship of the maiden
[=Dawn] and, speaking the truth, to the yoking of truth.
Those who approached the protector [=Vala?] of doubly exalted
(Dawn?), though they lacked the Gift-Cow, strove to milk the
immovable ones [=Vala rocks?].
11. Right away they hastened anew to the fellowship of the maiden and to
the semen, which was like a bounty, which is just truth—
your blazing legacy, which they gained through sacrifice, and the milk
of the ruddy female who gives sap as milk.
12. When afterward they became aware of their separation from the
livestock, he [=Bṛhaspati or Indra] speaks thus, while bestowing
(gifts) at the speaking:
"Through the goodness of the good one, the bards are blameless. He
exerts control over all movable property, all the way up to cattle."
13. They came just then as its besiegers; sitting (a session) for many (days),
they strove to split (the fortress?) of Nṛṣada.
The unassailable one disclosed what was knotted together, what was
hidden, of Śuṣṇa, who was propagated in many ways.

14. "Luster" is the name (of him), to whom the gods belong, who have set
him down in his triple seat like the sun,

and "Agni Jātavedas" is his name. Hear us, o Hotar, as our Hotar of
truth, free of deception.
15. And these two sons of Rudra, the Nāsatyas who possess the chant, are
to be greeted and offered sacrifice by me, o Indra—
the two who give (gifts) to him who, like Manus, provides the twisted
ritual grass; the delightful pair for whom pleasing offerings are set
out; and the two that seek sacrifice among the clans.

16. This king praised here has been extolled as a ritual adept, and as
inspired poet he crosses the waters, creating his own bridge.
He sets Kakṣīvant atremble and also Agni, as the swift-running wheel
of a steed does its wheel-rim.
17. He of two lineages, the son of Vitaraṇa, the sacrificer, is to milk the
milk-cow, which is sap-yielding but not giving birth,
when I enmesh Mitra and Varuṇa with hymns and Aryaman with
preeminent defenses.
18. The patron whose lineage this is, setting your insight in heaven,
Nābhānediṣṭha [/nearest to the navel], murmurs as he quests:
"Is this navel of ours highest or is his? I was the so-many-eth after
that one."
19. [Agni:] "This, here, is my navel, and here is my seat. These gods here are
mine, and here am I—the whole—
having two births, first born of truth. This (earth?) here did the cow
give as her milk as she was being born."

20. Now among these (clans) the gladdening, far-radiant spoked wheel
[=Agni] unhitches, the one having a double track, victorious within
the wood.
When the child of the house is like an upright line, right away the
mother gives birth to the sturdy one, who grows strong with
kindness.
21. And now the cows of the maiden [=Dawn] have gone forth, following
the distribution (of goods) of someone swollen (with wealth).
Listen to us, o you possessing good movable property; you, perform
sacrifice! I have grown strong through the liberal gifts of Āśvaghna
[/son of the horse-killer].
22. And now you, Indra—know us for the sake of great wealth, o lord of
men with the mace in your arms,
and guard those generous to us and protect our blameless patrons in
your charge, o possessor of fallow bays.
23. And now, o you two kings [=Mitra and Varuṇa, or the Aśvins], when
in the quest for cattle the hastening one, awakening, makes haste for
the bard,
the dearest inspired poet [=Agni?], because he has become theirs
[=patrons'], will carry them away and will bring them across.

24. And now at the thriving of him [=Agni] who is well born—we, rasping at will, now beg this: [see vs. 27]—
you, his son, are a hastening horse and an inspired poet—as also at the winning of fame.
25. If for the sake of companionship with you two [=Mitra and Varuṇa, or the Aśvins], for us who are his troop, he [=Agni/poet], receiving [/providing] reverence, finds pleasure in his praise hymn—
he in whom songs in all places come together, like a route with many parts—and he does ritual service for the sake of liberality,
26. He, being sung by the waters and with the gods on his side, is thus "of good lineage." With reverence and hymns,
with solemn words and speeches, he strengthens (the gods?), for now (he has) arrived. The (ceremonial) course departs from the "milk" of the ruddy one [=Dawn].
27. (...we now beg this:) "O gods worthy of the sacrifice, become joined together for great help for us,
you who, (now) departing, led prizes (here), and who are observers who are never fooled."

X.62 (888) All Gods

Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava
11 verses: jagatī 1–4, anuṣṭubh 5, bṛhatī 6, satobṛhatī 7, anuṣṭubh 8–9, gāyatrī 10, triṣṭubh 11

Attributed to the same poet as X.61, this hymn takes up some of the same themes as the previous hymn, but in much more straightforward fashion. The Aṅgirases, who figured in verses 10–13 of X.61, are the subject of the first seven verses of this hymn, with blessings heaped upon them in verses 1–4. Their lineal descent from Agni is clearly indicated here (vss. 5–6), while in X.61 it was present primarily by implication (vss. 9–10). The Vala myth is treated in verses 2 and 7, and in verse 3 the Aṅgirases are credited with cosmogonic deeds more appropriate to Indra.

The "navel" of X.61.18–19 is also encountered in verse 4 of this hymn (loc. *nā́bhā*, pāda a). Although some (e.g., Geldner) consider the navel in that verse to be a truncation of the (supposed) poet's name Nābhānediṣṭha, we consider it to a reference to the sacrificial ground or the ritual fire, as in X.61.19.

The first four verses end with the refrain "Accept the descendant of Manu (*mānavá*)." Geldner, who believes that the hymn conforms to the story told in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa V.14 about Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava, considers this refrain to be a self-reference by the poet and supplies "me" with *mānavám* as its appositive ("accept me, the descendant of Manu"). But we follow Oldenberg in considering the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa story secondary and, like many Brāhmaṇa explanations of Ṛgvedic hymns, based on misunderstanding. Given that our poet's patron is named Manu (see vss. 8 and 11), it seems more likely that in this refrain the poet is commending his patron and/or his family to the protection of the Aṅgirases.

The final four verses (8–11) are a dānastuti of this patron, Manu Sāvarṇi, with the final Aṅgiras verse (7) serving as a transition to this praise of magnanimity.

1. You who, anointed with the sacrifice and the priestly gift, achieved the fellowship of Indra and immortality,
for you, o Aṅgirases, let there be good fortune. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
2. The fathers who drove up the goods consisting of cows and with truth split the Vala cave at the turning of the year,
let there be long life for you, o Aṅgirases. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
3. Who with truth caused the sun to mount in heaven and spread out Mother Earth,
let there be good offspring for you, o Aṅgirases. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
4. This one here at the navel (of the sacrifice) speaks to you agreeably in the house. O you seers whose sons are gods, listen to this.
Let there be good sacred formulation for you, o Aṅgirases. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
5. Just these seers are the Virūpas [/of various forms]; just they possess profound inspiration.
They are the sons of the Aṅgiras; they were born from Agni.
6. The Virūpas [/those of various forms] who were born from Agni and from heaven,
Navagva, Daśagva, the best of the Aṅgirases: in company with the gods, (each) is generous.
7. With Indra as their yokemate, the cantors set loose the pen filled with cows and horses.
Giving me a thousand (cows) with cut-branded ears, they made fame for themselves among the gods.
8. Now let this Manu be propagated and let him grow like a sprout—
he who is magnanimous in giving all at once a thousand (cows) along with a hundred horses.
9. No one succeeds in taking hold of him any more than the back of heaven.
The priestly gift of Sāvarṇya spreads out like a river.
10. And also two barbarian-slaves to perform service, each with his allotted (gear), along with an abundance of cows,
have Yadu and Turva (each) magnanimously bestowed.

11. Let Manu, giver of thousands, leader of the horde, not suffer harm. Let his priestly gift come, aligning itself with the sun.
Let the gods extend the lifetime of Sāvarṇi, under whose auspices we, unwearied, won the prize of victory.

The next two hymns to the All Gods (63–64) are attributed to Gaya Plāta.

X.63 (889) All Gods

Gaya Plāta
17 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 16–17

The signature word of this hymn is *svastí* "well-being": in the dative *sᵘvastáye* it provides the last four syllables of verses 3–14, and its nominative opens five consecutive pādas in the verses after that refrain (15–16a). The gods from whom the poet solicits well-being are primarily the Ādityas and their mother Aditi, who especially dominate the first half of the hymn. Beginning with verse 9 other gods are also invoked, though the Ādityas keep their prominence. Not surprisingly in a hymn devoted to well-being, the emphasis is on positive thoughts, though some worries about potential dangers do intrude (see vss. 11–12). More surprisingly in a hymn with such a strong Ādityan cast, our potential moral flaws are barely mentioned (vs. 8c).

1. Those from afar who seek to establish friendship, who, gratified by Manu, (seek to establish) the races of Vivasvant,
the gods who sit on the ritual grass of Yayāti Nahuṣya—let them speak on our behalf.
2. For all your names, o gods, are worthy of homage, worthy of praise, and they are worthy of the sacrifice.
You who were born from Aditi or from the waters, who from the earth, listen to my call here.
3. Those for whom their mother swells the honeyed milk, (for whom) Aditi, (like) unbounded heaven, massive as a stone, (swells) the beestings,
those whose gusts are hymns, bullishly bearing, rich in property—applaud those Ādityas—for well-being.
4. Having their eyes on men, unblinking, as their due the gods have achieved lofty immortality.
Having light as their chariot, snake-sly, blameless, they wear the height of heaven as their garment—for well-being.
5. The very strong sovereign kings who have come to the sacrifice, who, undeviating, have established their own dwelling in heaven—
seek to entice them here with reverence, with well-turned (hymns)—the great Ādityas and Aditi—for well-being.

6. Who brings to success for you the praise that you will enjoy, all you gods of Manu, however many you are?
Who will properly prepare for you, powerfully born ones, the ceremony that will carry us across difficult straits—for well-being?
7. You for whom Manu, with his fire kindled by mind, along with the seven Hotars, first attracted Hotrā (Libation) with sacrifice,
you Ādityas, hold out fearlessness as shelter. Make easy passages, easy pathways for us—for well-being.
8. The forethoughtful counselors who are masters of the world, of everything stationary and moving—
o gods, rescue us today from transgression done or not done—for well-being.
9. In the raids we call on Indra easy to call, on the divine race of good action that releases from difficult straits,
on Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, for winning, on Heaven and Earth, the Maruts—for well-being.
10. Upon Earth of good protection and faultless Heaven, upon Aditi of good shelter, of good guidance,
(as) upon a divine boat with good oars, without defect, not leaking, may we mount—for well-being.
11. All you worthy of the sacrifice, speak for us, for help; rescue us from the crooked ill-going way.
With an invocation to the gods that comes true we would invoke you as you listen, o gods, for aid—for well-being.
12. Away with disease, away with all lack of oblation, away with the ill-met hostility of the malicious.
Gods, keep hatred at a distance from us. Extend broad shelter to us—for well-being.
13. Every mortal thrives unharmed and is propagated with progeny forth from his foundation,
whom, o Ādityas, you lead with your good leading across all difficult passages—for well-being.
14. Which one, o gods, you help at the contest for prizes, which one, o Maruts, you help at the contest of champions when the stake is set,
that early-traveling, winning chariot, which suffers no harm, might we mount, o Indra—for well-being.
15. Well-being for us on the pathways and in the wastelands, well-being in the waters, in the precinct of the sun,
well-being for us in the wombs at the making of sons—well-being confer (on us) for wealth, o Maruts.
16. For it is just well-being that is best on the path forward—that, (already) rich in inheritance, sets out toward something valuable.
Let it keep guard over us at home and in a foreign place; with the gods as its herdsmen let it be easy of access.

17. In just this way has the son of Plati of inspired thought strengthened you, all you Ādityas and Aditi.
The over-mastering superior men, the divine race, has been praised by Amartya Gaya.

X.64 (890) All Gods

Gaya Plāta
17 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12, 16–17

Making up for his restrained focus on the Ādityas in the preceding All God hymn (X.63), the poet Gaya Plāta here produces an expansive litany of almost every god and goddess he can think of, major or minor. He begins with rhetorical questions (vs. 1): which god would it be best to address? Having suggested that all of them are potentially his targets (vs. 2), he runs through a long list of possible individuals (vss. 3–12), sometimes listing the bare name, sometimes offering further characterization.

Only in verses 13–14 do we reach something more interesting. In verse 13 he expresses his hope that the Maruts will recognize their "common birth" with him, presumably on the basis of their shared role as singers and poets (on this see also I.87.5), as they meet at the "navel" (the loaded word of X.61–62, hymns attributed to a different poet). The navel here must be both the sacrificial ground of the here-and-now and the mythical point of their joint origin, before their division into mortals and gods. In verse 14 he suggests Heaven and Earth as a model for this kinship. Perhaps the idea is that Heaven and Earth are not divided, with Heaven taking the gods' side and Earth that of mortals, but they work as partners—both being related to the gods and both accepting the sacrifice of men. In any case the kinship that the poet has suggested he has with the Maruts as poets he asserts in another way in verse 16, where he describes himself as a "powerfully roaring poet" (*kavíṣ tuvīrávān*), the exact phrase with which he identified Bṛhaspati, the wordsmith par excellence of the gods, in verse 4.

The final two verses (16–17), in a different meter from the rest of the poem, are the poet's summary verses, both beginning with *evā́* "in this way" and both mentioning the poet by name. The second of the two is also found at the end of X.63.

1. How shall we contemplate—of which one of the gods shall we contemplate the name that is good to contemplate, as they listen to my plea?
Who will be merciful; which one will create joy for us? Which one will turn hither with help?
2. Our intentions are intent (on them), the insights in our hearts. Our trackers follow their track and fly to (all) directions.
No dispenser of mercy other than them is found. My desires have fastened upon the gods.

3. (Shall it be) Narāśaṃsa, Pūṣan, Agohya (the Unconcealable), or Agni kindled by the gods that I address with a hymn,
or the Sun and Moon, (the new and) bright [=full] Moon, Yama in heaven, Trita, Wind, Dawn, Night, the Aśvins?
4. How will the powerfully roaring poet Bṛhaspati grow strong, through what hymn with its well-twisted (ornaments)?
Let Aja Ekapād with the chanters who are easy to call, let Ahi Budhnya harken to my call.
5. Or, o Aditi, at the birth of the skillful one [=Agni] under your commandment, will you seek to entice here the two kings Mitra and Varuṇa?
(Or will it be) Aryaman, whose path is not to be transgressed, who possesses many chariots, who possesses seven Hotars, at his births in diverse forms?
6. Let the steeds who heed the call heed our call—all the prizewinners of measured pace,
who by themselves win thousands as if at the winning of wisdom, the ones who have greatly borne away for themselves the spoils in the encounters.
7. Set in front with your praises Vāyu, who hitches up the chariot, Plenitude, and Pūṣan, for comradeship,
for at the impulsion of god Savitar they follow his will—those of one mind (follow the will) of him who is of one mind (with them).
8. The thrice seven flowing rivers, the great waters, the trees, the mountains, and Agni do we call upon for help—
and upon the archers in their seat—Kṛśānu, Tiṣya (the Dog Star), and Rudra the Rudrian among the Rudras.
9. Sarasvatī, Sarayu, Sindhu with their waves—let the great strengthening ones come here greatly with their help—
the divine waters, the sweetening mothers. Sing their ghee-rich, honey-rich milk for us.
10. And let the mother Bṛhaddivā hear our speech, and Tvaṣṭar with the divine ones, (namely) the Wives (of the Gods), and the Father, Ṛbhukṣan, Vāja, Lord of the Chariot, Bhaga. Let the delightful laud of the one who labors protect us—
11. Delightful to the sight like a peaceful dwelling abounding in food. Auspicious is the praise invocation of the Rudras, the Maruts.
May we be glorious among the peoples with our cows. May we always be accompanied by refreshment, o gods.
12. The insight that you gave me—you gods, Maruts, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra—
make it swell like a milk-cow with milk. Surely you will convey the hymns on your chariot?

13. Surely in some way you will take notice of this common birth of ours, Maruts?
    At the navel where we first come together, there let Aditi establish our relationship.
14. For Heaven and Earth, the two great mothers, the goddesses worthy of the sacrifice, proceed by virtue of their kinship with the gods.
    Both support both (breeds [=gods and men]) with their supports, and with the Fathers they sprinkle much seed.
15. Hotrā (Libation) reaches through to everything of value—as do Bṛhaspati and Aramati [/Devotion], the very admirable.
    Where the honey-pressing pressing-stone is given lofty voice, the inspired thinkers have bellowed with their thoughts.
16. In just this way the powerfully roaring poet, knowing the truth, seeking goods, desiring goods,
    the inspired Gaya here with hymns and compositions has swelled the divine races.
17. In just this way has the son of Plati of inspired thought strengthened you, all you Ādityas and Aditi.
    The overmastering superior men, the divine race, has been praised by Amartya Gaya.

Hymns X.65–66 are attributed to a Vasukarṇa Vāsukra, who is otherwise unknown in the Ṛgveda. But his patronymic links him to Vasukra Aindra, poet of the fiendishly challenging and immensely clever X.27–29, as well as another poet with the same patronymic, namely Vasukṛt Vāsukra, one possible author of X.20–26, another set of well-crafted hymns. Moreover, the final verse of X.65 (15) and the final two of X.66 (14–15) mention Vasiṣṭha and the Vasiṣṭhas, and both hymns end with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain familiar from Maṇḍala VII.

X.65 (891) All Gods

Vasukarṇa Vāsukra
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

The poetic pedigree sketched above gives us high expectations for the hymn, which, however, begins unpromisingly with a simple enumeration of gods. Nonetheless, although the style never achieves the same distinction as that of the poet's putative relatives, there are many nice touches and twists and turns of syntax, particularly in verses 2–8, treating the cosmogonic deeds of the gods and the praise and sacrifice offered to them by mortals.

The hymn seems to begin anew with verse 9, which contains another straightforward listing of gods, continued in verse 10. A brief account of cosmogony (vs. 11) is followed by a sketch of the Aśvins' deeds (vs. 12). Minor gods join the undifferentiated mass of All Gods in verses 13–14, and the hymn ends with Vasiṣṭha's summary verse.

1. Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Vāyu, Pūṣan, and Sarasvatī, of one accord,
   the Ādityas, Viṣṇu, the Maruts, the lofty Sun, Soma, Rudra, Aditi, Brahmaṇaspati,
2. Indra and Agni, the two lords of the settlement, spurring each other on mutually in the smashing of obstacles, sharing the same home—
   they (all) filled the great midspace with their might, as did Soma, glorious with ghee, rousing their greatness.
3. For by the greatness of these, the great and unassailable, I, recognizing the truth, rouse my praises for those who grow strong through truth.
   Let those who are bringing brilliant bounties (across) the watery flood grant them to us. I magnify the (heavenly clans) well allied (to us).
4. They propped up (the region) of solar glory, the midspaces, the realms of light, Heaven and Earth, the Broad One, with their might.
   Magnifying (them), bringing lovely gifts like strengthening nourishments, the gods are praised as patrons to the race of Manu.
5. Try your utmost for Mitra and for Varuṇa who does ritual service, the two sovereign kings who do not stay distant in their thought,
   whose lofty domain shines by reason of their ordinance, for whom the two world-halves are two opposing troops in need of help.
6. The cow [=offering ladle?] that goes around the (ritual) track to the appointed place, giving her milk, leading at the commandment (of Varuṇa), not by choice,
   she, being announced, will do ritual service to Varuṇa who (also) serves, to the gods, and to Vivasvant with the oblation.
7. Those ruling over heaven, with Agni as their tongue, growing strong through truth, sit stroking the womb of truth.
   Having propped up heaven, they brought the waters here by their might. Having given birth to the sacrifice, they clasped it to themselves.
8. The two parents born of old, encircling, sharing the same home, rule in the womb of truth:
   Heaven and Earth, who obey the same commandment to Varuṇa, swell the ghee-filled milk for Varuṇa, the buffalo.
9. Parjanya and Vāta, the two overflowing bulls, Indra and Vāyu, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman—
   we summon the gods—the Ādityas and Aditi (also)—who are earthly, heavenly, and in the waters.
10. O Ṛbhus, (we beseech) Tvaṣṭar and Vāyu, who vaunts himself, the two divine Hotars, and Dawn, for well-being;
    we beseech Bṛhaspati of good wisdom, the gnawer of Vṛtra, and Soma, destined for Indra—we who win the stakes.

11. Those of good gifts, begetting the sacred formulation, the cow, the horse, the plants, the trees, the earth, the mountains, the waters,
causing the sun to mount in heaven, loosing the Āryas' commandments upon the earth.
12. You rescue Bhujyu from difficult straits, o Aśvins. You gave life to Śyāva, the son of Vadhrimatī.
You carried Kamadyū to Vimada. You let loose Viṣṇāpū for Viśvaka.
13. The daughter of Pavīru, Thunder, and Aja Ekapad, the supporter of heaven, the river, and the waters of the sea—
all the gods will hear my words: (they and also) Sarasvatī, along with insights [/Dhī] and with plenty [/Puraṃdhī].
14. All the gods, along with insights and with plenty, worthy of Manu's sacrifice, immortal, recognizing the truth,
the Escorts and the Gift-Escorts, finding the sun, should take pleasure in the sun, the songs, the sacred formulation, and the hymn.
15. Vasiṣṭha has extolled the immortal gods, who stand out over all living beings.
Let them grant us wide-ranging space today. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

X.66 (892) All Gods

Vasukarṇa Vāsukra
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

The listing impulse found in the previous hymn is here carried further. The gods in general, groups of gods such as the Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudras, and individual gods both major and minor are invoked here, with conventional descriptors and predicates and with standard prayers for help and blessing. There is little to catch the attention in this hymn, though it is certainly competently done.

1. I call upon the gods of lofty fame for well-being—the makers of light, attentive to the rite,
who, having all possessions, have grown even stronger, the immortals having Indra as their chief, grown strong through truth—
2. Who, thrust forth by Indra, directed forth by Varuṇa, attained a share of the light of the sun.
We would set our thoughts on the community having the Maruts as their troop. In their generosity, they begot the sacrifice as its patrons.
3. Let Indra with the Vasus protect our livelihood on every side. Let Aditi with the Ādityas extend shelter to us.
The god Rudra with the Rudras shall be merciful to us. Let Tvaṣṭar with the Wives (of the Gods) enliven us for good faring.

4. Aditi, Heaven and Earth, great truth, Indra and Viṣṇu, the Maruts, and the lofty Sun—
we call upon the gods for help—the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, and well-skilled Savitar.
5. Sarasvant along with insights, Varuṇa whose commandments are upheld, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, the Greatness, Vāyu, and the Aśvins,
the creators of sacred formulations, immortal, having all possessions, they will extend to us shelter providing threefold defense from difficult straits.
6. Let our sacrifice be a bull and those belonging to the sacrifice bulls, the gods bulls, and those making the oblation bulls;
truthful Heaven and Earth bulls, Parjanya a bull, and those praising the bull bulls.
7. I entreat the bulls Agni and Soma in order to win the prize, those two bulls lauded by many.
Those two to whom the bulls have sacrificed through their sacrifice to the gods, those two will spread out shelter providing threefold defense for us.
8. The rulers whose commandments are upheld, who bring forth the sacrifice, heaven-lofty ones, the full glory of the rite,
whose Hotar is Agni, who serve the truth without deceit—they let loose the waters following on the triumph over Vṛtra.
9. They begot heaven and earth to their commandments, and the waters, the plants, and the trees belonging to the sacrifice.
They filled the midspace and the sun to give help. The gods clasped their will to themselves.
10. Let the upholders of heaven, the Ṛbhus with skilled hands, let Vāta and Parjanya, (masters?) of Thunder the buffalo,
let the waters and plants advance our songs. Let Bhaga, Gift, and the prizewinners come to my call.
11. The sea, the river, the dusky realm, the midspace; Aja Ekapad, Thundering, the flood,
and Ahi Budhnya will hear my words, (also) all the gods and my patrons.
12. Might we (all) be Manus [=like Manu] for you, to pursue the gods. Lead our sacrifice forth toward the east straight to the goal.
O Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus, of good gifts, give life to these sacred formulations as they are being recited.
13. The two divine Hotars, the first two set in front, do I follow along the path of truth straight to the goal.
We beseech the lord of the field, our neighbor, and all the immortal gods, who do not stay distant.

14. The Vasiṣṭhas have made speech in the manner of their father, invoking the gods in the manner of that seer for well-being.
Like pleased kinsmen, coming here at our desire, shake good things down upon us, o gods.
15. Vasiṣṭha has extolled the immortal gods, who stand out over all living beings.
Let them grant us wide-ranging space today. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

The two hymns of Ayāsya Āṅgirasa (67–68) are particularly noteworthy treatments of Bṛhaspati and the Vala myth.

X.67 (893) Bṛhaspati

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

This is perhaps the clearest treatment of Bṛhaspati's role in the Vala myth and of his identity with Indra, the usual hero in the Vala story. As discussed above (see especially the introduction to IV.50), Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1968) has clearly shown that *bṛ́haspáti* was originally an epithet of Indra in his role as priest and formulator, a role that is highlighted in the Vala myth—since Indra opens the Vala cave and frees the cows not with his normal power and violence but with song and correctly crafted verbal formulae. In this hymn Bṛhaspati is credited with the deed, but in equivalence with Indra. The names are essentially superimposed upon each other, an equation made more obvious by their positioning: the name Bṛhaspati opens the second half-verse of verses 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and the more transparent version of his name, Brahmaṇaspati, is in the same position in verse 7. In the midst of this sequence, in the middle verse 6, we find Indra in initial position in the verse and credited with the same deed. The poet could hardly have made their identity clearer. (The final verse of the hymn [12] begins with the word Indra, here as hero of other stories, especially the Vṛtra myth.)

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with the primal finding and production of a true insight; the unidentified "fourth one" in the second half of the verse probably refers to the fourth, inaudible portion of speech, or the fourth formulation, which figures prominently in Vedic speculations on the nature and power of speech (see Jamison 1991: 251–57). The second verse introduces the Aṅgirases, the crucial partners of Bṛhaspati/Indra in the opening of the Vala cave; they too find the truthful word. The next five verses (3–8) narrate the dramatic opening of the cave and the freeing of the cows. One notes a certain irony in the poet's treatment of Vala: though the cave is first depicted as a fetter (vs. 4) and a stronghold (vs. 5), it is described with the ambiguous term "guard" in verse 6 (a term as ambiguous in Sanskrit as it is in English), and then with a more sarcastic tone "cow-nurturer" in verse 7 and "cow-herd" in verse 8.

The hymn ends with four verses celebrating the god and asking for blessings. Most interesting in this section is the final pāda of verse 10 (if we have rightly interpreted it), which alludes to the different poetic skills and styles of the mortal celebrants.

1. This seven-headed insightful thought here, born of truth and lofty, did our father find.
The fourth one indeed did the irrepressible one, belonging to all men, generate as he was pronouncing a solemn speech for Indra.
2. Pronouncing the truth, thinking straight, the sons of heaven, the heroes of the lord,
the Aṅgirases, establishing their inspired word [/laying their inspired track], pondered the first foundation of the sacrifice.
3. Along with his comrades, who were constantly gabbling like geese, while he was throwing open the fastenings made of stone,
while he kept roaring to the cows, Bṛhaspati both started the praise song and struck up the melody, as knowing one.
4. With two (gates) below, with one above, the cows standing hidden in the fetter of untruth—
Bṛhaspati, seeking light in the darkness, brought up the ruddy ones, for he opened up the three (gates).
5. Having split apart the stronghold (from front) to back, (having split apart) the lairs, at one blow he cut out the three [=dawn, sun, cow] from the reservoir.
Bṛhaspati found the dawn, the sun, the cow, (found) the chant while he was thundering like heaven.
6. Indra cut apart Vala, the guard over the milkers, with a roar like a tool.
Seeking the milk-mixture with (his comrades) anointed with sweat, he made the niggard wail: he stole the cows.
7. With his trusty comrades blazing, with the winners of spoils, he cleaved apart the cow-nurturer.
The Lord of the Sacred Formulation reached through to the treasure with his bulls, his boars, with their hot sweat [/sweating over the gharma pot].
8. With trusty mind begging the cowherd for the cows, they compelled him with their insightful thoughts.
Bṛhaspati loosed the ruddy ones upward, with his own yokemates who protect each other from fault.
9. With our propitious thoughts strengthening him, ever roaring in his seat like a lion,
we would celebrate Bṛhaspati the bull, victorious at the contest of champions, victorious in every raid,

10. When he won the prize of all forms and mounted to heaven, to the higher seats.
    Bṛhaspati the bull (would we celebrate), strengthening him—though each (of us) brings light with our mouth in our own way.
11. Make our hope come true, our hope for the conferring of vigor. For you help even the weakling in your own ways.
    Let all slighters be off, be behind (us). You two world-halves, who set all in motion, hear this.
12. Indra with his greatness split apart the head of the great flood, of Arbuda.
    He smashed the serpent. He let flow the seven streams. O Heaven and Earth, along with the gods, further us.

X.68 (894) Bṛhaspati

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

A wonderful hymn, which takes the fairly straightforward (though artful) narrative of the Vala myth in the preceding hymn (X.67) and embroiders each part of it with imaginative and studied imagery and verbal constructions. Most striking is the blizzard of similes, many having two and even three points of comparison (see, e.g., 5ab), or with simile piled on simile (see, e.g., 1c), or with complex social content (vs. 2). By contrast X.67 contains only four similes (3a, 5d, 6b, 9b), each with only one point of comparison—a number essentially reached in the first verse of this hymn.

As a particularly elaborate example consider the underlying content of verse 2, whose role in the mythic narrative is simply to state that Bṛhaspati reunited the Aṅgirases with their cows. But this reunion is compared to the ceremony of marriage and the participants are compared to the married couple and to the divinities who preside over marriage. (If we understood Vedic marriage ceremonies better, we might understand the verse better.) In the first half of the verse Bṛhaspati leads the unnamed Aṅgirases to reunion with the cows, just as Bhaga (Fortune or Good Fortune) leads Aryaman, the "civilizing" god of custom, one of whose roles is patron of marriage, to the marriage ceremony in order to preside. The ceremony itself is performed at the ritual fire, and in the third pāda of the verse Bṛhaspati is compared to Agni, under the designation "ally among the people" (several times used of Agni elsewhere). Just as Agni anoints the marrying couple with milk, so Bṛhaspati "anoints" the Aṅgirases (compared to the couple) with cows. The fact that the word for "ally" (*mitrá*) is identical to the divine name Mitra simply introduces another complication into this complicated verse. Since, as the next verse (3) makes clear, the cows are embodiments of civilization, of the social bonds that unite the Ārya peoples, this remarkable verse is not just a poetic tour de force, but also an assertion of the centrality of social custom.

Another complex simile worth exploring is in the second half of verse 6, where the poet exploits the ambiguity of two words (*páriviṣṭam* and *ā́dat*) to deploy two distinct three-term comparisons simultaneously. The past passive participle *páriviṣṭam* can belong to either of two roots, √*viś* "enter," in which case the idiom means "surrounded, trapped," or √*viṣ* "work," in which case the idiom means "served." The verb *ā́dat* can belong to √*dā* "give," with preverb *ā́*, in which case the idiom means "take," or to √*ad* "eat." Combining these possibilities, we can interpret the image as that of the tongue worrying food caught between the teeth, or as the tongue and the teeth eating food that has been served. Either image can be appropriate to the removal of the cows from the cave, though we are partial to the notion of Bṛhaspati winkling out cows from every interior crevasse.

There is no need, or space, to dissect every simile; we can only invite the reader to savor the exuberance, the precision, and often the everyday nature of the imagery throughout the hymn and to consider the construction of these similes as forerunners of the kāvya style in Classical Sanskrit.

1. Constantly gabbling like water birds watching out for each other, like the sounds of booming (thunder) emanating from a cloud,
   exulting like waves stiff-peaked (like) mountains, the chants bellowed toward Bṛhaspati.
2. (Bellowing) with the cows, (Bṛhaspati) Aṅgiras, coming near, led (the Aṅgirases) together with the cows, as Bhaga leads Aryaman.
   As the ally among the people [=Agni] anoints the household pair, he anoints (the Aṅgirases). O Bṛhaspati, incite them like swift (horses) in a contest.
3. (The cows—) thoroughly civilized, providing for guests, vigorous, cherished, of lovely color and faultless form—
   Bṛhaspati, having brought them through, strewed the cows forth from the mountains, like grain from sacks.
4. Spraying the womb of truth with honey, flinging (it=honey?) down like a firebrand from heaven when the chant (sounded),
   Bṛhaspati, when he brought the cows up out of the stone, split asunder the skin of the earth as if (just) with water.
5. With his light he drove away the darkness from the midspace as the wind drives the *śīpāla*-plant from the water.
   Bṛhaspati, having (just) stroked (the skin/womb) of Vala, as the wind does a cloud, brought the cows here as his own.
6. When Bṛhaspati split the feebleness of taunting Vala with his fire-hot chants, he took (the cows) as the tongue takes (food) trapped by the teeth
   [/he "ate" (the cows?) as the tongue along with the teeth eats served (food)], and he revealed the hidden treasures of the ruddy (cows).

7. For Bṛhaspati brought to mind this very name of these who were resounding (with)in the seat—(the name) that was hidden.
Having split the womb of the mountain like the eggs of a bird, he drove up the ruddy ones by himself.
8. He caught sight of the honey enclosed by the stone, like a fish living in shallow water.
He extracted it, like a (wooden) cup from a tree—Bṛhaspati having cut apart (the mountain) with an (ear-)splitting cry.
9. He found the dawn, found the sun, found the fire; he thrust aside the dark shades with his chant [/ray].
Bṛhaspati extracted (the cows) of Vala, whose beauty was the cows, like marrow from a joint.
10. As the woods (lament) their leaves stolen by cold, Vala lamented for the cows (stolen) by Bṛhaspati.
He performed an inimitable (deed), not to be repeated as long as the sun and moon will rise in alternation.
11. Like a dusky horse with pearls, the Fathers ornamented the heaven with stars.
In the night they placed darkness and light in the day. Bṛhaspati split the rock and found the cows.
12. This act of reverence here we have performed for the one belonging to the storm cloud, who keeps bellowing after the many (cows?):
Bṛhaspati—for he shall confer vigor on us with cows, with horses, with heroes, with superior men.

Sumitra Vādhryaśva is said to be the composer of the next two hymns (69–70), one to Agni, one an Āprī hymn.

X.69 (869) Agni

Sumitra Vādhryaśva
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–2

This hymn is discussed at length and translated in full by Proferes (2007: 40–44), who calls it "perhaps the clearest example of a tribal fire and the ritual role of the clans in relation to this fire. It illustrates the existence of a central fire tended by multiple clans who affirm through it their mutual solidarity, and who see in it the source of their domination over others" (p. 40). This particular clan-fire is that of King Vadhryaśva (see vss. 1–2, 4, 10–12), a speaking name with a deprecatory sense: "possessing gelded horses," and in fact the fire itself bears the patronymic "son/descendant of Vadhryaśva" (see vss. 5, 9, 12). The current fire is also contrasted with fire or fires kindled previously (vss. 4–5), and toward the end of the hymn this fire present here is depicted as victorious over former fires, presumably belonging to other clans (vss. 10–11). Such victories are just an aspect of the victories over other peoples that the clan-fire brings Vadhryaśva and his allies, the men who kindle and tend this fire (vss. 5–6, 9–12).

One curious detail in the hymn is found in verse 7, where various possessions are ascribed to the fire (here called a craftsman), including "a thousand barren cows." The negative connotations of this property are immediately counteracted in the next verse (8ab), in which the fire is credited with having an abundantly fertile cow whose flow of milk is inexhaustible, but the great flock of barren cows is nonetheless odd. It finds its explanation in a semantic pun: just as the triumphant and successful Vadhryaśva bears the name "possessing gelded horses" so does his equally triumphant and successful fire "possess barren cows."

Stylistically there is much chaining of phraseology and repetition of syntactic patterns.

1. Auspicious are the manifestations of the fire of Vadhryaśva; his guidance is valuable; reverent approaches (to him) bring joy.
When the clans that are good allies kindle him at the beginning, bepoured with ghee he awakens, flashing again and again.
2. The strengthener of the fire of Vadhryaśva is ghee; ghee is his food, ghee his fattener.
Bepoured with ghee, he spreads out widely. He shines like the sun—his potion melted butter.
3. Which face of yours Manu kindled, which (did) the good ally, o Agni, that is this one here anew.
Blaze richly; take pleasure in the songs. Break out the prize; confer fame here.
4. You whom Vadhryaśva, when reverently invoked, kindled formerly, o Agni, do you take pleasure in this (new face) here.
Become the protector of our people and the protector of our own bodies. Guard the gift—whatever you have for us here.
5. Become possessed of brilliance, o son of Vadhryaśva, and our herdsman. Let the hostile intent of the peoples not overtake you.
A rouser like a bold champion, a good ally—I shall now proclaim the name of Vadhryaśva's son.
6. The goods of the plains and the mountains, the Dāsa and the Ārya obstacles—you have conquered them entirely.
A rouser of the peoples like a bold champion—you, o Agni, should dominate those who seek battle.
7. This fire here has a long thread and lofty oxen; the craftsman has a thousand barren cows and a hundred counsels.
Brilliant among the brilliant (gods), being groomed by men, you will shine among the good allies who seek the gods.

8. O Jātavedas, in you is the milk-cow, yielding good milk, milking out nectar always in the same way, like the two [=Heaven and Earth] that never dry up.
You, Agni, are kindled by men who receive the priestly gifts, by the good allies who seek the gods.
9. Even the immortal gods proclaimed your greatness, o Jātavedas, son of Vadhryaśva.
When the clans of the sons of Manu came to negotiate, you conquered by means of the men whose strength is you.
10. Like a father his son, Vadhryaśva bore you on his lap as he served you, o Agni.
And taking pleasure in his kindling, o youngest one, you vanquished the former (fires), even though they were greatly arrogant.
11. Over and over the fire of Vadhryaśva has conquered rivals by means of the men that provide the pressed soma.
You burned even the (whole) crowd, o bright-beamed one; as strengthener you cut down even the greatly arrogant one.
12. Here is the fire of Vadhryaśva, the smasher of Vṛtra, kindled from of old, to be addressed with reverence.
Subjugate those, whether non-kin or estranged kin, who defy us, o son of Vadhryaśva.

X.70 (896) Āprī

Sumitra Vādhryaśva
11 verses: triṣṭubh

An eleven-verse Āprī hymn, with Narāśaṃsa in verse 2 (like II.3, V.5), where some Āprī hymns instead have Tanūnapāt (I.188, III.4, VII.2, IX.5, and X.110). There are otherwise few deviations from the standard Āprī hymn template, except that *ṛtvíj* "priest, orderly sacrificer" is substituted for the standard Hotar in verse 7. The trimeter meter gives more scope for elaboration than some of the more minimalist dimeter Āprī hymns (e.g., I.13). A signature word is *uśánt* "eager, desirous" (4d, 5c, 6c, 9d). As always in Āprī hymns, the key word or phrase in each verse is italicized.

1. Take pleasure in this *kindling* wood of mine, o Agni; delight in the ghee-covered (ladle) in the footprint of refreshment.
On the height of the earth, on the brightest day of days, become upright, o very resolute one, together with our sacrifice to the gods.
2. As the lead driver of the gods, let *Narāśaṃsa* drive here with horses of every form

along the path of truth; with reverence the foremost of the gods will sweeten the ritual meal for the gods.
3. The sons of Manu, offering oblations, time and again *solemnly invoke* Agni to act as messenger:
"With the best-conveying horses and with a smoothly rolling chariot, convey the gods here. Sit down here as our Hotar."
4. Pleasing to the gods, let it be spread out crosswise; long in length let it be sweet smelling for us.
O divine *Ritual Grass*, with a mind without anger sacrifice to the gods, having Indra as their chief, who are eager for it.
5. Touch the wider back of heaven, or gape open along the measure of the earth.
Eagerly, seeking the chariot, o *Doors*, with your greatness and with the great (gods) hold fast the divine chariot.
6. Let the two goddesses, the handsomely adorned daughters of Heaven, *Dawn and Night*, sit down in the womb.
Let the eager gods sit here in the wide lap of you two eager ones who possess a good portion.
7. The pressing stone is upright; the fire has been loftily kindled: their own dear domains are in the lap of Aditi [=ritual ground?].
You *two priests*—placed in front at this sacrifice, win material wealth by sacrifice, as the two who know better.
8. You three *goddesses*—sit here upon this wider ritual grass: we have made a comfortable place for you.
As in the time of Manu, they—Iḷā, the goddess with feet of ghee, (and the other goddesses)—take pleasure in our sacrifice and our properly placed oblations.
9. God *Tvaṣṭar*, since you have attained loveliness and since you have come to be in the company of the Aṅgirases,
(convey the sacrificial animal) forth to the fold of the gods, as you know how; eagerly perform the sacrifice, as one possessing treasure, o giver of material wealth.
10. O *Lord of the Forest*, harnessing it with a halter, convey it into the fold of the gods, as you know how.
The god will sweeten and prepare the offerings. Let Heaven and Earth aid my call.
11. O Agni, convey Varuṇa here to our liking, also Indra from heaven and the Maruts from the midspace.
Let them all, worthy of the sacrifice, sit on the ritual grass. Let the immortal gods bring themselves to exhilaration at the *svāhā-call*.

The next two very well-known and often anthologized hymns are attributed to the legendary Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, with alternative, equally legendary, authorship suggested for X.72. According to the Anukramaṇī, X.71 is dedicated to Jñāna "Wisdom" or "Knowledge," but it is knowledge in the form of sacred speech (Vāc). (The word *jñāna* does not occur in the hymn, or indeed in the Ṛgveda.) Hymn X.72, dedicated simply to the gods (Devāḥ) according to the Anukramaṇī, is a cosmogony focused on the origin of the divinities.

X.71 (897) Wisdom

Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 9

This hymn describes the mastery of sacred speech (*vā́c*), which is essential for the priests performing the soma rites. This mastery binds the priests together, establishing their "companionship" (vs. 2). The degree of mastery distinguishes one priest from another (vss. 4–5, 7–8), while the inability or unwillingness of some priests to employ sacred speech in performance marks them and their mastery as useless (vss. 6, 9). Using the language of horseracing, the poet speaks of the "competition" or "competitions" (*vā́jina*, vss. 5, 10) in which priests succeed through their mastery of speech. These "competitions" could be contests to determine which priests can best compose hymns or recite hymns and therefore which ones will be chosen to participate in a ritual performance. That kind of contest occurred and is likely described in verse 10ab. It is also true that the poem emphasizes the composer of the hymns: it begins with a reference to Bṛhaspati, the "Lord of the Sacred Formulation," and in the concluding list of priests, the *brahmán*, the "formulator," is the only one mentioned by name. But the "competitions" could also be the sacrifices themselves, which strive against one another for the attention and favor of the gods. If so, sacred speech is not contained just in the hymns, but constitutes all of the speech in the rite. This broader conception of sacred speech is implied in the reference to the "seven husky-voiced singers" (3d), who are likely the "seven Hotars," the seven priests of the sacrifice (cf. II.1.2), and the reference to four types of priests in the last verse.

The hymn begins by remembering the ancient seers (cf. vs. 3b, *ṛ́ṣi*), who first found the "hidden name." As Schmidt (1968: 124) suggests, the reference may be to the ancient seers who found the hidden name of the cows and so were able to release the imprisoned cows from the Vala cave (cf. X.68.7). Their concerted priestly action and effective priestly speech is then a model for contemporary priests, to whom the poet shifts in verse 2. These priests have also created the speech of the sacrifice, and their knowledge and their ability to articulate that speech bind them together as colleagues. Because sacred speech belongs to them, it carries their "mark" or "brand" (*lakṣmī́*, 2d). In verse 3 they found this speech

by the sacrifice, for it was in the words of the ancient seers, who were their ancestors and forerunners. They have brought that speech into the present and dispersed it throughout the sacrifice. Not everyone who would recite or compose is capable of doing so (vs. 4). Or, as verse 5a puts it, there are those who are "stiff and swollen in their companionship." This description is open to various interpretations, but "stiff and swollen" could apply to a corpse and here metaphorically describe someone who is useless, similar to the American expression "the guy's a stiff." Their talent is unproductive, "no milk-cow," and their words are sterile, bringing no "fruit or flower" (5d). Likewise, the uncooperative priest betrays the speech he perceives because only the priests together can perform the rite (vss. 6, 9). In verse 9cd the poet compares the speech in the sacrifice to the warp-threads on which the sacrifice is woven. But someone who does not use his knowledge and ability in the rite offers nothing more substantial than a stream of water and produces nothing worthwhile.

This hymn and its concentration on *vā́c* invites comparison with the famous self-praise pronounced by the goddess Vāc herself (X.125), though the tone of the two hymns is very different.

1. O Bṛhaspati, (this was) the first beginning of Speech: when they [=the seers] came forth, giving names.
   What was their best, what was flawless—that (name), set down in secret, was revealed to them because of your affection (for them).
2. When the wise have created Speech by their thought, purifying her like coarse grain by a sieve,
   in this they recognize their companionship as companions. Their auspicious mark has been set down upon Speech.
3. Through the sacrifice they followed the track of Speech. They found her having entered into the seers.
   Having brought her here, they dispersed her in many places. The seven husky-voiced singers together cry her out.
4. And many a one who sees has not seen Speech, and many a one who hears does not hear her.
   And for another she has stretched out her body, like an eager, well-dressed wife for her husband.
5. And they say that another is stiff and swollen in his companionship: him they do not spur on at all in the competitions.
   He moves with an artifice that is no milk-cow, having heard Speech without fruit or flower.
6. Who has abandoned the companion joined (to him) in knowledge, for him there is no share in Speech at all.
   When he hears her, he hears in vain, for he does not know the path of the rightly performed (ritual).

7. Though all have eyes and ears, the companions are unequal in quickness of mind.
   Some seem like ponds reaching up to the mouth or up to the armpits, and others seem like ponds good to bathe in.
8. When, in the mind's quickness that is fashioned in the heart, brahmins perform the sacrifice together as companions,
   then they leave behind some by their knowing ways and others range widely with their lauds and formulations.
9. Who move neither close nor far away, who are not brahmins, and who do not perform in the soma-pressing,
   they, having fallen upon speech in a bad way, stretch streams of water as their warp-thread, producing nothing.
10. All his companions rejoice with a companion who has come in glory, who is overpowering in the assembly,
    for, rescuing them from their errors and winning sustenance for them, he is fittingly spurred onward to the competition.
11. The one [=Hotar] sits, blooming a blooming of verses; the other [=Udgātar] sings a song in śakvarī verses.
    The one, the formulator [=Brahman], speaks the knowledge born (in him), and the other [=Adhvaryu] measures out the measure of the sacrifice.

X.72 (898) The Gods

Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, Bṛhaspati Laukya, or Aditi Dākṣāyaṇī
9 verses: anuṣṭubh

Geldner remarks that the hymn almost seems as if the poet intentionally wanted to show the insolubility of the problem of the origin of things by setting incompatible theories of cosmogony alongside one another. While we find greater coherence than this, we recognize the complexities and uncertainties that caused Geldner to come to this conclusion. At least at a very general level, the hymn does show a cosmogonic progression from "what is not existing" to "what is existing" and finally to immortal gods and mortal humans.

The hymn also has thematic elements in common with the preceding hymn. The most obvious is that *bráhmaṇas pátiḥ*, the Lord of the Sacred Formulation (vs. 2), is Bṛhaspati, who is invoked at the beginning of X.71. Then too, while it has the appearance of a cosmogony, the hymn also makes repeated reference to sacrificial performance. One thematic strand of this hymn is that the sacrifice embodies the principles that gave rise to the world.

In verse 3 what Bṛhaspati "smelted" is the "births" of the gods, as Sāyaṇa already noted. Bṛhaspati brings them about by means of a sacred formulation (*bráhman*)

expressing the origins of the gods. But such a formulation can also bring about the birth of the gods in a specific ritual place at the time of a ritual performance. In that way, words—or the thoughts behind words—can make beings real. Perhaps this is what the poet means when in verse 2d he says that "what exists," what are "things" (the world, the gods, and humans), was born from "what does not exist," what are not "things" (thoughts or words).

In verse 3cd "the one whose feet were opened up" gives rise to what exists, which in turn gives rise to the regions of space. But in 4ab "the one whose feet were opened up" gives rise to the earth, which gives rise to the regions. That is to say, between the two hemistichs, there is a shift in the middle term: "what exists" in verse 3 and "the earth" in verse 4. The key to the significance of this shift is the word *bhúi* "the earth." "The earth" is only one possible translation; the word could also mean a "form" that something assumes (cf. III.55.13b=X.27.14d) or, etymologically at least, the act of "becoming." If the ambiguity is intentional, then the two verses together redefine "what exists" as that which has material substance—most broadly the earth or more specifically what has form.

The source of "what exists" or "the earth" is the principle or entity described as "one whose feet were opened up" (*uttānápad*). Falk (1994: 7–10) understands *uttāná* to describe something whose feet are "turned upward," perhaps the upside-down world tree with its roots above. We take the more common approach in seeing here an image of birth or possibly sexual availability. But then whose feet are these? If the answer is inside the hymn, then it might be the goddess Aditi, who appears in verse 4 and is a mother of the gods in verses 8–9. Or again, since "what exists" (*sát*) is said to have arisen from "what does not exist" (*ásat*) in verses 2 and 3, there is perhaps an implied identification of "the one whose feet were opened up" with "what does not exist." Whoever or whatever the *uttānápad* may be, the term also contains an oblique reference to the lower *aráṇī*, one of the pieces of wood used to kindle the sacrificial fire. See, for example, III.29.3ab addressing the priests, *uttānáyām áva bharā cikitvān, sadyáḥ právītā vṛ́ṣaṇaṃ jajāna* "Attentive, bear down upon her who is opened up (*uttānā́*) [=the lower fire-churning stick]. Impregnated on this day, she has given birth to the bull [=Agni]." That is to say, the appearance of fire from the fire-churning wood replicates the emergence of "what exists" from "what does not exist."

In verse 4cd the poet describes the paradoxical birth of Aditi from Dakṣa and Dakṣa from Aditi. Aditi is not only a goddess, but also a principle, the principle of Innocence or Offenselessness against the gods. Likewise, Dakṣa can be a god personifying ritual Skill. Their birth from one another may signify the mutual dependence of freedom from offense against the gods and ritual skill, both of which are necessary to carry out the sacrifice. Similarly, there may also be reference to the sacrifice in verse 5d, in which the gods are said to be *amṛ́tabandhavaḥ*. The compound can mean that the gods are kin of the "immortal" Soma or Agni or that they are kin "to immortality" or that they are connected to the immortal waters (Falk 1994: 13). There are possible references to the ritual or ritual mythology in the succeeding

verses as well. Thus, in 6d *tīvrá*, "sharp" or "bitter," is a typical description of soma. Or again in 7a the Yatis are ritual priests, whose death resulted in the rains that swell "the living worlds" (cf. Jamison 1991: 111). And finally in 7cd the sun in the waters can be a figure describing soma (cf. Oberlies 1999: 164–65) or fire.

The last two verses describe the birth of immortals, Aditi's "seven sons," with whom she went to the ancient generation of gods (vs. 9ab), and the birth of mortals, who are born from a "dead egg" (Hoffmann 1976b [=1992: 723]), a divine miscarriage, both "for procreation" and "for death" (9cd).

As a cosmology the hymn invites comparison with X.129.

1. Now amid acclaim we will proclaim the births of the gods,
   so that one in a later generation will see (them) as the hymns are recited.
2. The Lord of the Sacred Formulation [=Bṛhaspati] smelted these (births) like a smith.
   In the ancient generation of the gods, what exists was born from what does not exist.
3. In the first generation of the gods, what exists was born from what does not exist.
   The regions of space were born following that (which exists)—that (which exists) was born from the one whose feet were opened up.
4. The earth was born from the one whose feet were opened up; from the earth the regions of space were born.
   From Aditi, Dakṣa was born, and from Dakṣa, Aditi.
5. Because Aditi was born—she who is your daughter, o Dakṣa—
   following her, the gods were born, the auspicious kin of the immortal one.
6. When, o gods, well clasped to one another, you stood there in the ocean,
   then the bitter dust [=spray] dispersed from you, like (the dust [=sweat?]) of those dancing.
7. When, o gods, just as the Yatis did, you swelled the living worlds,
   then you brought here the sun, which was hidden in the sea.
8. Eight are the sons of Aditi, which were born from her body.
   With seven she went forth to the gods. She cast away the one stemming from a dead egg.
9. With seven sons Aditi went forth to the ancient generation.
   For procreation but also for death, she brought here again the one stemming from a dead egg.

Two hymns to Indra (73–74) are ascribed to Gaurivīti Śaktyā; the first is quite complex, the second quite straightforward.

X.73 (899) Indra

Gaurivīti Śaktyā
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A dense and difficult hymn, with many cryptic allusions to Indra's birth and some of his exploits. The Anukramaṇī ascribes it to the same poet as V.29, the first Indra hymn in the Vth Maṇḍala, and indeed this hymn has links to some of the fragmentary narratives in the early Indra hymns of V, especially V.30 and 31.

The hymn begins and ends with the birth of Indra; the unusual and difficult nature of that birth was also the subject of IV.18. In verses 1–2ab it seems that Indra's mother was beset with some trouble at the time of his birth. Nonetheless, he was successfully born but required strengthening by the Maruts. The account of his birth at the beginning of the hymn is quite straightforward when compared to the one given in verse 10, where several alternative sources of Indra are suggested. The common opinion seems to be that he "came from a (male) horse," though "I" (the poet) have a different view. And the last word (or non-word) is Indra's: "whence he was born, only Indra knows that."

The material immediately after the birth story is extremely cryptic, and our interpretation is quite speculative. We believe that verses 2cd–5ab combine two motifs: a ritual situation, the early-morning sacrifice, and a mythological one, the image of Indra as cosmic begetter and tender parent. The dawn ritual is suggested by the Aśvins' journey to the sacrifice with Indra (3d, 4b) and the apparent mention of early morning in 2d. The mythological material is harder to evaluate and to bring into a coherent schema. In 2cd it seems that something, quite possibly the worlds, were covered, perhaps sexually, by a "great foot(print)," and from the darkness there came embryos, presumably engendered in this encounter. Since Indra's feet are mentioned in the next verse (3a), it seems likely that the "great foot" in verse 2 is Indra, covering the worlds and begetting the embryos.

Verse 4 brings us the curious image of Indra with a thousand hyenas in his mouth. Though Geldner, for example, considers this simply a measure of how big a mouth Indra has and specifically denies that it has anything to do with the widespread Brāhmaṇa stories of Indra and the hyenas, this seems disingenuous. Since the hyena word appears only twice in the Ṛgveda and only once in conjunction with Indra, it seems perverse not to explore the possible connection with these later tales. The Brāhmaṇa narratives and the light they may shed on this passage are discussed at length in Jamison (1991: pt 1). Suffice it to say that hyenas carry their young around in their mouths like cats, and the image here suggests that Indra is functioning as an attentive parent to his brood. Another aspect of Indra's parental role may be found in the next verse (4cd), where Indra "makes fast" thousands in an otherwise unidentified female: "make fast" seems a reasonable euphemism for impregnate or implant embryos. This section concerning Indra's fatherhood seems to come to an end in 5ab.

After this we turn to Indra's great deeds, especially the slaying of Namuci (5cd–7), a deed also treated in the related hymn V.30.7–8. Why the abrupt switch from Indra as parent to Indra as killer? The answer probably lies in the early-morning context of this hymn. Indra famously vowed not to kill Namuci by day or by night, or with a weapon dry or wet. The weapon, according to later accounts, was foam (also glancingly alluded to in VIII.14.13), and the time of slaughter the morning twilight—the exact time depicted in the hymn. We also consider the "darkening mists and darkness" of 5d to be the weapon used for the slaughter (rather than the later foam), since mist, too, counts neither as wet nor as dry. This mist, diffused like smoke, though directed at Namuci, settles "even on the two of the same name," whom we identify as the Aśvins, mentioned several times previously in the hymn, who make their journey during the early morning twilight.

Verse 8 summarizes Indra's accomplishment of his deeds by way of his epithets and acknowledges the applause of the gods, but it ends (8d) with a cryptic allusion to another of Indra's deeds, continued, in our view, in the first pāda of verse 9. Another tale favored in the early Indra hymns of Maṇḍala V is the chariot race between Indra and the Sun, in which Indra steals the Sun's wheel and puts his chariot in front of the Sun's, though it had been behind (see, e.g., V.31.11). The "topsy-turvy" outcome of 8d and the stuck wheel of 9a are suggestive of this myth. The rest of verse 9 simply celebrates Indra's fructifying of the plants and animals, which may remind us of his parental role earlier in the hymn, and with verse 10 we return to his mysterious birth. In the final verse (11) the poets ask Indra for aid in their plight.

1. You were born as the strong one for powerful might, the gladdening strongest one with manifold designs.
   It was just the Maruts who strengthened Indra then, when his mother, best at pushing (in childbirth) [/running], was going to set the hero to running.
2. She, even though caressing (him), was sunk down because of the activities of (demonic?) deceit. They [=Maruts] strengthened Indra much with their laud.
   These (worlds) were as if covered over [/sexually "covered"] by a great footprint [=Indra]. From the dark, from the early morning, embryos arose.
3. Lofty are your feet when you go forth. The Vājas and whatever (others) were there strengthened (you).
   You, Indra, took a thousand young hyenas in your mouth. You should turn the Aśvins hither.
4. In the same way—swiftly—you drive to the sacrifice; convey the Nāsatyas hither for fellowship.
   Indra, you made fast thousands in the wife of the good one [=impregnated her?]; the Aśvins gave bounties, o champion.

5. Becoming exhilarated, to produce progeny from truth, Indra (went) to the goal with his vigorous comrades.
   Because with these (wiles of his) he came right up to the Dasyu [=Namuci], to *his* wiles, he scattered forth darkening mists and darkness.
6. You sent the smoke for him [=Namuci] down even on the two of the same name [=Aśvins]; you smashed (him) down, Indra, like the cart of Dawn.
   You went with your lofty, avid comrades; at one blow you smashed his heart's foundations.
7. You smote Namuci who sought combat, rendering the Dāsa without wiles, for the seer.
   You made the paths comfortable for Manu, as if they went straightaway to the gods.
8. You have fulfilled your names completely; showing mastery, you have taken (them) in your fist.
   The gods cheer you on in your vast power. You turned the wooden things [=chariots?] topsy-turvy,
9. When his wheel was sunk down in the waters. And that should seem just honey to him,
   the udder bound tight onto the earth, the milk that you placed in the cows and in the plants.
10. When they say, "he came from a horse," I think of him rather as born from strength:
    he came from (battle) fervor; he stayed in a secure house [=womb?]. But whence he was born, (only) Indra knows that.
11. The fine-feathered birds have flocked to Indra—the Priyamedhas, seers in need.
    Open up the dark (place); fill our eye. Free us who are bound as if by a snare.

X.74 (900) Indra

Gaurivīti Śaktyā
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Although attributed to the same poet as the last hymn and also dedicated to Indra, this hymn fortunately lacks the challenges that X.73 poses—and in fact takes awhile to get to Indra. The first three verses simply announce the poet's intention to praise the gods and ask them to travel to the sacrifice with goods to bestow. The last three verses (4–6) turn to Indra exclusively, suggesting first in verse 4, via an allusion to the Vala myth and, possibly, to the Maruts' mother

Pṛśni, the sacrificers' desire for cows and sons. More praise for Indra follows in verses 5–6, with the final pāda (6d) expressing the expectation that Indra will fulfill our desires.

1. Seeking to gain (their favor), I pay tribute to the Vasus or to the two world-halves, by inspired thought or by sacrifices,
   or to the steeds that become rich at the (occasion for) winning, or to those who hear well [=gods] who set the eager one to find good hearing.
2. At the invocation to them the lordly one [=Agni] will reach heaven; with a mind seeking fame he will kiss the earth,
   at the time when the gods, looking for easy passage, will equip themselves with their own choice things, like heaven (with stars).
3. Here is the song for these immortals, who in their entirety long for (it as their) treasure.
   Bringing to success both inspired thought and sacrifice, let them establish a mass of goods for us, and not by halves.
4. The Āyus admire this (greatness?) of yours, Indra—they who will wish to drill through to the enclosure full of cows [=Vala],
   who wish to milk the great (cow [=Pṛśni?]) who gives birth only once but has many sons, the lofty one with a thousand streams.
5. Cause able Indra to help you—the unbowable one who subdues the battlers,
   the master of the Ṛbhus, liberal, who (receives) well-twisted (hymns), the possessor of many cattle who bears the mace appropriate to superior men.
6. When the previous victor won the latest of many, Indra the Vṛtra-smasher fulfilled his names:
   he appeared as the powerful lord of victory. What we wish him to do, that he will do.

The next two hymns (75–76) are attributed to different poets, at least the second quite fancifully, by the Anukramaṇī, but clearly form a dyad (Oldenberg 1888: 236 n. 3). The first is devoted to the rivers, the second to the pressing stones.

X.75 (901) Rivers

Sindhukṣit Praiyamedha
9 verses: jagatī

This hymn celebrates the headlong glories of rivers, especially the Sindhu, here presented as the principal river into which all the others flow (see esp. vs. 4). As with the hymns to Sarasvatī (VI.61, VII.95–96), this one contains both naturalistic, if hyperbolic, description of the river (vss. 3, 7) and depictions of her as a beautiful woman and a prizewinning horse. Especially notable in the hymn is the litany of river names in verses 5–6, which many scholars have mined for geographical information.

1. At the seat of Vivasvant [=ritual ground] the bard will speak forth your highest greatness, o waters,
   for forth they strode in three stages, seven each time; forth (strode) Sindhu with her strength, beyond that of the (other) flowing (waters).
2. Varuṇa dug out the paths for you to travel, when, o Sindhu, you ran to the prizes.
   You travel on a slope along the back of the earth, when you direct the front rank of these moving (beings).
3. Her sound takes its place in heaven, above the earth. She sends up snorting without end along with radiance.
   Like rains from a cloud her "rains" thunder forth, when Sindhu goes like an ever-bellowing bull.
4. To you, Sindhu, like mothers to their young, like milk-cows with their milk do they [=tributary rivers] rush bellowing.
   It's you who lead them as a battling king does the two "seams" (of the army), when you seek to reach the front rank of these sloping (waters).
5. Here, o Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī—attend on this praise of mine, o Śutudrī, Paruṣṇī.
   With the Asiknī, o Marudvṛdhā, with the Vitastā, o Ārjīkīyā, harken, with the Suṣomā.
6. To travel first joined with the Tṛṣṭāmā, (then) with the Susartū, the Rasā, and this Śvetyā,
   you, o Sindhu, (come) with the Kubhā to the Gomatī, with the Mehatnū to the Krumu, on the same chariot (with all these), with which you go speeding.
7. Straight in her course, mottled, glistening, in her greatness she holds encircled the expanses, the dusky realms—
   the undeceivable Sindhu, busiest of the busy, dappled-bright like a mare, lovely to see like a beautiful woman.
8. Sindhu has lovely horses, lovely chariots, lovely garments; she is golden, well-fashioned, rich in prize mares;
   the young woman is rich in wool [=foam], in *sīlamā* (plants?); and the well-portioned one puts on (a garment/plant) increasing the honey.
9. Sindhu has yoked her own well-naved, horsed chariot; with it she will gain the prize in this contest here,
   for the great greatness of it invites admiration—it undeceivable, self-glorious, conferring abundance.

X.76 (902) Pressing Stones

The snake Jaratkarṇa Airāvata
8 verses: jagatī

Of the three hymns dedicated to the pressing stones (X.76, X.94, and X.175), X.175 is brief and minimalist. Hymns X.94 and X.76 have a number of phrases and images in common, but X.94 is more charming than X.76, with vivid and imaginative comparisons and a light tone, while X.76 is perhaps more rhetorically ambitious, with some mythological and cosmic resonances, as well as some challenging syntax. The stones are more often addressed in the 2nd person and with imperatives in X.76 (no imperatives are addressed to the stones in X.94). This implicit attribution of agency to the stones becomes more pronounced toward the end of this hymn, where they seem to supplant the human pressers. The word *náraḥ* "superior men" is found in verses 6–8; although the first two occurrences could be interpreted as referring to humans, the last is a vocative addressed to the stones—which makes it clear that in the previous two verses the "men" must be the stones as well.

1. I stretch straight toward you at the first dawn flushes of nourishment.
   Anoint Indra, the Maruts, and the two world-halves,
   so that both day and night, in partnership, will make every seat spacious for us as they break out.
2. Press this as the best pressing. Like a racehorse controlled by the hands, the stone is in (the control of) the presser.
   Because it finds the masculine power that is overwhelming to the stranger, for the sake of great wealth he [=presser] also attains to (that masculine power), which (comes) from the steed [=stone].
3. For it has labored at just this pressing, at its task. Just as previously (Indra) set the course for Manu
   to Tvaṣṭar's (wealth?), which was flooding with cows and arrayed in horses, they have set ceremonies upon ceremonies.
4. Smash away the demons with their wreckage. Block Dissolution. Repel heedlessness.
   Press out wealth in hale heroes for us. Carry a tune that pursues the gods, you stones.
5. To you, more formidable even than Heaven, swifter working even than Vibhvan,
   more soma-frenzied even than Vāyu, better food-preparers even than Agni—sing!
6. Let the glorious ones clatter for us—let it press (soma) out of the stalk—the stones with their voice, (which is) heaven-bound, heavenly,
   when the superior men milk the desirable honey for themselves, making (Heaven and Earth) heed all about as they [=stones] cross each other transversely.

7. The stones, the charioteers, press the soma. They milk out the juice of him who seeks the cows.
   They milk the udder, to pour it out. As superior men they groom (the soma), like oblations, with their mouths.
8. You superior men, you have become the good workers who press soma for Indra—you stones.
   Every thing of value of yours is for the heavenly domain; every good thing of yours for the earthly presser.

The next two hymns (77–78), attributed to Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava and dedicated to the Maruts, share an unusual metrical structure and a rhetorical scheme. Although according to the Anukramaṇī the meter is triṣṭubh, in fact in X.77 only the last three verses (6–8) really conform to that meter, and in X.78 only the last (8). Most of the rest of the verses have eleven-syllable pādas, as is diagnostic of triṣṭubh, but clear jagatī cadences, an even more diagnostic test. As Oldenberg has shown (1888: 92–95), most such pādas have an opening of five syllables, ending with a light syllable (regularly *ná* "like"), followed by two heavy syllables, the first of which seems to substitute for the double-light break usual after an opening of five. (There is also often a word-break after these two heavy syllables, seeming to produce a second caesura in the line.) The apparent equivalence of the heavy sixth syllable with two light syllables introduces a principle of substitution or responsion not otherwise found in Vedic, or most Classical Sanskrit, meters, a principle that only achieves prominence in the Āryā meter quite possibly deriving from Middle Indo-Aryan.

X.77 (903) Maruts

Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava
8 verses: triṣṭubh (and mangled jagatī)

On the metrical structure, see the introduction just above.

Rhetorically the hymn (through vs. 5) is dominated by similes, often studied and syntactically complex ones, with three or four similes in every verse. When the dense concentration of similes ends (beginning with vs. 6), the meter returns to conventional triṣṭubh and to conventional hymn-ending expressions of hope for favor.

Most of the descriptions of the Maruts, however contorted their syntax, belong to the familiar repertoire of Marut characteristics: their stormy nature, their association with Indra, their beauty and ornaments, their boisterousness. However, twice they are connected with the Ādityas (vss. 2d, 8b), a group of gods with which they generally have nothing in common. This connection is puzzling. Thieme (1938: 158) suggests that their common quality was "caring for the stranger" (if that is what the disputed word *ríśādas*, also found twice in the hymn [vss. 3, 5], means).

1. Like (the Maruts) showering (rain) from a cloud with their speech [=thunder], I will shower goods with my speech. The sacrifices of a discerning one [=poet] are like [=just as good as] those provided with oblations.
   I have praised the flock of them as if praising the Formulator [=Indra?], who is well provided with Maruts—have praised them for their worthiness (of soma), as if for their beauty.
2. For their splendor the young bloods have provided themselves with ornaments across the many nights, just as they have made (the Formulator) well provided with Maruts.
   The sons of heaven have taken their places like antelopes; (as) Ādityas they have grown strong like foals [?].
3. Those who by themselves project beyond heaven as beyond earth mightily, like the sun beyond the clouds,
   inviting admiration like heroes of (great) dimension, heaven-bound like young bloods who care for the stranger.
4. At your journey—as if (resting) on a base of waters, as if going with faltering step, the great (earth) becomes slack.
   There is a sacrifice consisting of all good things close by. It is for you. Like dispensers of ritual delight, come here to those who are concentrated (on you).
5. With your reins [/rays] you are like (horses) hitched up to the chariot-poles—like light-bearing (fires) at the early brightenings with your beam—
   self-glorious like falcons, caring for the stranger—when (just) launched, (you are) like water birds, showering (drops) all around.
6. When you drive yourselves forth from afar, Maruts, you (come as) the ones who know of the great enclosure of goods,
   of goods to be realized, o good ones. Even from a distance keep hatred far away.
7. The descendant of Manu who, like (Agni) standing up at the ceremony, will do ritual service to the Maruts at the sacrifice when the chant is raised,
   he will acquire rich vitality abounding in good heroes. Let him be in the protection of the gods.
8. For they are helpers worthy to receive sacrifice at the sacrifices, the best luck-bringers, by the Ādityan name.
   Let them aid our inspiration, (like a horse) that outstrips chariots, as they take pleasure in the journey of their great (host) and in the ceremony.

X.78 (904) Maruts

Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava
8 verses: triṣṭubh and jagatī

This hymn has the same unusual meter as X.77 and, like X.77, is structured as a series of similes. In fact, this hymn goes further than the previous hymn in both features. The only standard triṣṭubh verse is the final one (8), which also breaks the rhetorical pattern. And the similes not only continue throughout the hymn (until vs. 8) but are under more rigid syntactic control. It is worth discussing in some detail how the poet has crafted his hymn and how the apparently rigid repetitive structure, with each pāda containing exactly one simile, still allows the possibility of forward momentum and rhetorical climax. (See also Jamison 2007: 77–79.)

Each of the first seven verses of this eight-verse hymn contains four pāda-length similes, each marked with *ná* "like," and with the point of comparison almost always positioned at pāda-end. Since in runs of similes it is common to alternate between the simile-markers *ná* and *iva*, the complete avoidance of *iva* in this hymn is noteworthy and the regular repetition of *ná* contributes to the sense of regimentation. Furthermore, the *ná* is almost exclusively in second position in the pāda and is generally the last syllable of the opening (before an often irregular break: see the introduction to X.77).

All of these similes are in the nominative plural masculine, with the Maruts always the subject. This rigid syntactic structure, reinforced by its coinciding exactly with metrical units, has an almost claustrophobic effect—an effect significantly enhanced by the fact that the first six verses are entirely nominal in their syntax: in these twenty-four separate clausal similes there is *not one* finite verb or even predicated participle. (This exclusively nominal style cannot be entirely captured in translation.) This syntactic stasis contrasts markedly with the nature of the subjects being celebrated, for the Maruts are the most active gods in the Ṛgveda. Moreover, many of the similes in this hymn concern the Maruts' uncontrollable energy, despite the motionless quality of the poetic form. The disjunction between content and form produces a remarkable aesthetic effect. Yet the effect is not of complete stasis even in these verses, for the subjects of the similes modulate from verse to verse, while the complexity of imagery increases gradually. For examples, the winds appear in verses 2 and 3 in different images, likewise bride-seeking young men in verses 4 and 5, with two types of stones and two types of mothers in verse 6.

And then finally in verse 7 the straitjacket of nominal style is broken: though this verse, too, contains four pāda-length similes, both hemistichs end with finite verbs, 7b *vy àśvitan* "they have shone forth," 7d *mamire* "they have measured." While maintaining the underlying structure that unifies the hymn, the poet manages, by strictly grammatical means, to build to a climax. The energy kept suppressed by the nominal style is finally released by the finite verbs of verse 7.

The last verse (8), which is, as noted, the only standard triṣṭubh, abandons the structure of the rest of the hymn, and in conventional terms asks the gods for the usual gifts, as so often in final verses. But it is noteworthy for containing the first and only occurrence of the name *marút* in the hymn. Retroactively we can see that the hymn also functions as a very long riddle, whose answer is given only in this last verse. This verse is linked to what precedes by a small and subtle verbal device. As noted, twenty-five of the twenty-eight preceding pādas begin X *ná*, with the simile marker in second position; verse 8 begins X *no* (i.e., *naḥ* "us"). The poet invites us to expect yet another simile, but substitutes the phonetically similar 1st-person plural enclitic pronoun in its place. Thus, though the verse is cast in entirely different stylistic terms from the rest of the hymn, its integral connection to what precedes is signaled by the playful *naḥ*. (Note that the *naḥ* is entirely unnecessary in this verse, since it redundantly doubles and anticipates the full pronoun *asmắn* opening the second pāda.)

1. Rich in purpose like inspired poets with their thoughts, rich in profit like those who pursue the gods with sacrifices,
   lovely to look at like brilliant kings, unblemished like the young bloods of the settlements—
2. Who, with brilliants on their breasts, are like fire with their flash; like the winds, their own yokemates, bringing immediate aid;
   providing good guidance like elders who think ahead, providing good shelter like soma drinks to the one pursuing truth—
3. Who like the boisterous winds are always on the move, radiating like the tongues of fires,
   vehement like armored warriors, bringing lovely gifts like the lauds of the ancestors—
4. Who, like the spokes of chariots, have the same nave(l), heaven bound like victorious champions,
   showering ghee [=rain] as young bloods gone awooing shower (goods), of good rhythm like those who sound a chant—
5. Who are swift like superior horses, of good gifts [/drops] like charioteers seeking to acquire (brides),
   always on the move with their moisture like the waters with their depths, displaying all forms through their melodies like the Aṅgirases—
6. Like pressing stones, the patrons have a river as their mother; like rocks they always keep pounding.
   Playful like little children with good mothers, like a great host (of warriors) on their journey and with their turmoil—
7. Like the beacons of the dawns providing splendor to the ceremony, like those in pursuit of beauty they have shone forth with their ornaments—

coursing like rivers, those with glinting spears have measured out the stages of their journey like the distant realms.

8. O gods, make us possessed of good portions, good treasures, strengthening us as your praisers, o Maruts, when you have been strengthened.
   Give study to our praise song, to our fellowship. For from long ago occasions for the conferring of treasures have been yours.

The next two Agni hymns (79–80) belong together.

X.79 (905) Agni

Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara or Sapti Vājambhara
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn begins with a 1st-person vision ("I have seen . . . ") and in its middle verse (4) announces a truth, again in the 1st person—though the speaker disclaims real discernment for himself, while ascribing it to the god Agni. Such rhetorical moves are typical of omphalos hymns, but the mystery in this hymn seems less profound than the structure in which it is embedded seems to promise. It is simply the common trope of Agni as an insatiable eater, with a nice twist in verse 6, where the poet commiserates with Agni for having, because of imagined sins, to eat without teeth. Although the supposed enigma of this hymn is not particularly enigmatic, the style is lively and the images sharp.

1. I have seen the greatness of him, the great one, of the immortal one among the mortal clans.
   His jaws are alternately opened up and closed together again. Insatiable, gnawing, they eat amply.
2. His head is deposited in hiding; his eyes set apart. Insatiable, he eats the wood with his tongue.
   With their feet they [=priests] collect things for him to eat, their hands outstretched with reverence among the clans.
3. Questing further and further for the hidden place of his mother like a child, he creeps through the wide plants.
   He [=priest?] found him, gleaming like ripened grain, licking within the lap of the mount [?].
4. I proclaim this truth to you, o you two World-Halves: while being born, the embryo eats his two mothers [=kindling sticks].
   As a mortal, I do not discern the god, but Agni certainly discerns afar and discerns ahead.

5. Whoever sets out dry food for him, pours oblations with melted butter and ghee for him, and prospers (him),
for that (man) you gaze afar with your thousand eyes. Agni, you face in every direction.
6. What sin of omission or commission have you done before the gods? I now ask you, Agni, since I do not know.
Whether at play or not, tawny (Agni) has to eat without teeth. You have cut apart (the wood) piece by piece, as a knife does a cow joint by joint.
7. Born in the wood, he has yoked his own horses that face in all directions, controlled by reins that stretch straight.
Our well-born ally has carved up (the meal) together with the good (gods); he has come together with (all) his parts, having grown strong.

X.80 (906) Agni

Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The most salient feature of this hymn is the form of the word *agní* that begins every pāda. In the first half of the hymn (vss. 1–4) the form is almost exclusively nominative singular (save for the genitives in 2a and 4d), while the second half has primarily the accusative. As so often, the final verse breaks the pattern: the first trisyllabic form (dat. *agnáye* in 7a) is followed by two vocatives (*ágne*) in the last hemistich (7cd), a simple grammatical switch that turns the insistently descriptive 3rd-person cast of the rest of the hymn into a direct, 2nd-person plea to the god for help and wealth.

The actual contents of the hymn are subordinated to this formal structure. Most of the first half of the hymn is devoted to detailing the gifts and aid that Agni generally provides, though verse 3 briskly mentions four mythological precedents where Agni has aided specific individuals, somewhat in the style of the catalogues of good deeds in Aśvin hymns. (In fact, the only reasonably well-known figure in vs. 3 is Atri [3c], whose rescue is usually attributed to the Aśvins.) Verses 5–6 establish Agni as the target of all creatures in need. In the final verse (7) the poet both announces his hymn, produced on the model of the Ṛbhus, and states what he wants in return.

1. Agni gives a prize-bringing team; Agni (gives) a hero, worthy of fame, outstanding through his work—
Agni roams widely through the two world-halves, anointing them completely—Agni (gives) a woman with a hero in her belly, Plenitude (herself).

2. Let Agni's kindling be auspicious and of profit. Agni has entered the two great world-halves.
Agni propels the one in battles; Agni divides up the many obstacles.
3. Agni helped this Jaratkarṇa [/ear of the old man]; Agni burned Jarūtha out from the waters.
Agni gave freedom to Atri, (who was) within the hot vessel; Agni brought Nṛmedha together with offspring.
4. Agni gives wealth whose ornament is heroes; Agni (gives) a seer who wins thousands.
Agni stretches the oblation to heaven; Agni's domains are dispersed in many places.
5. It's Agni whom seers vie in calling upon with their recitations; Agni (do) men when hard-pressed on an expedition;
Agni (do) birds flying in the midspace. Agni encircles thousands of cows.
6. It's Agni whom the clans stemming from Manu invoke; Agni (do) those born variously from Manu and from Nahus.
Agni (has found) the Gandharvan path of truth; Agni's pasture-land is set down in ghee.
7. For Agni did the Ṛbhus fashion their formulation; to Agni have we spoken a great, well-turned (hymn).
O Agni, youngest one—further the singer; o Agni, win great wealth by sacrifice.

Two hymns (X.81–82) to Viśvakarman are attributed to the dedicand himself.

X.81 (907) Viśvakarman

Viśvakarman Bhauvana
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Viśvakarman, the "Maker of Everything" (or literally, "who has the making of everything"), is the carpenter (vs. 4ab) and smith (vs. 3cd) of creation, who fashioned the world. But he is also both an ancient seer (*ṛṣi*) and Hotar (vs. 1) and a present companion (vs. 5cd) and help (vs. 7) to the sacrificers, for his priestly work has continued from the ancient past into the present (vs. 1cd). This priestly work is closely connected with his creative work. He wins heaven and earth by a sacrifice that he carries out for his own sake (vs. 6ab), and his ritual work is dedicated to the benefit of the realms he surveys (vs. 5). In the first line the poet speaks of Viśvakarman's "pouring" beings "in oblation" (*júhvat*). It is not clear exactly what he means by that phrase, but it likely describes a process by which Viśvakarman sustains the living world through time or continues to make living beings his own.

The phrase must be significant, since the poet verbally recalls it in the last verse, when he anticipates that Viśvakarman will enjoy the "oblations" (*hávanāni*) offered to him. In 1c the description "seeking wealth with hope" refers to Viśvakarman's ritual activity, which carries the hope of prosperity for the sacrificer.

The first and last verses of the hymn create a frame for the hymn. In the first verse, Viśvakarman is both a seer (*ṛ́ṣi*) of hymns and a Hotar, who pours oblations (*júhvat*). In the last he is the *vācás páti-* "Lord of Speech," who "will take pleasure in oblations (*hávanāni*)." That is, within the hymn, Viśvakarman begins as the model of a priest who both speaks and makes offerings, and concludes as the master of speech and the recipient of offerings, who supports the sacrificers. This movement from divine priest to priestly divinity exalts poets and priests, who are closely associated with him and whose words and deeds follow his.

One of the stylistic characteristics of the hymn is the echoing of Viśvakarman's name through the frequent use of *víśva* "every, all" (vss. 2d, 3ab, 7cd). Even more striking is the repeated use of words containing the *v*-sound also extracted from his name. Over a third of the words of the hymn contain that sound. Its repetition is especially obvious in 5cd *śikṣā sákhibhyo havíṣi svadhāvaḥ svayám yajasva tanvàṃ vṛdhānáḥ* and 6ab ***víśvakarman haviṣā vāvṛdhānáḥ svayám yajasva pṛthivī́m utá dyā́m***, two pādas that together have a string of twelve words containing *v*. The invocation to Viśvakarman and his presence thus persist even when his name is not explicitly mentioned.

1. The seer who took his place as Hotar, pouring all these living beings in oblation—our father,
   seeking wealth with hope, entered the later (generations while) concealing the first ones.
2. What was the resting place? Which one was providing support? How was it?—
   that from which Viśvakarman, producing the earth, (also) uncovered the heaven by his greatness—he who has his eyes on everything.
3. Whose eyes and face are turned in every direction, whose arms and feet move in every direction,
   producing heaven and earth, he forges them together with his arms, with his fan(-bellows)—he, the god alone.
4. What was the wood? What was the tree?—out of which they fashioned heaven and earth.
   O you of inspired thought [=priests], in your thinking ask about that upon which he rested, giving support to living beings.
5. What are your highest domains, what your lowest, and these that are your midmost, Viśvakarman—
   do your best for them for the sake of your companions at the oblation, o you of independent will. Increasing your own person, by yourself sacrifice for yourself.

6. O Viśvakarman, since you are increased through the oblation, by yourself win earth and heaven by sacrifice.
   Let the other peoples all around be left in confusion; for us here let there be a generous patron!
7. We would today summon the Lord of Speech, Viśvakarman, swift as thought, for help in the contest.
   He will take pleasure in every oblation of ours—he who is luck for everyone, whose work succeeds—to give us help.

X.82 (908) Viśvakarman

Viśvakarman Bhauvana
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn complements the preceding one and may be the more interesting of the two since it offers various hints about the various roles that Viśvakarman plays. The first words of the hymn, which call Viśvakarman the "father of the eye" (*cákṣuṣaḥ pitā́*), create the possibility of double reference. On the one hand, as Geldner and Renou (*EVP* XV: 170) rightly see and the subordinate clause "for he is insightful in mind" supports, the eye is the inspired vision of seers. On the other hand, the "eye" can be the eye of the sun, as frequently in the Ṛgveda (e.g., I.164.14, V.40.8, 59.5, X.10.9). This double possibility is realized in the remainder of the verse, which describes both the sacrifice and the cosmos. In pāda b, the primary reference is to the sacrifice, evident in the ghee that the father produced. Because they are set in a sacrificial context, "the two that bob up and down" refer initially to the sacrificial ladles (*juhū́*), bending to the fire. But the two can also be heaven and earth, which rise and fall, a subsequent reading triggered by pāda d. In 1cd there is a shift to a cosmic context, which then becomes primary, and the sacrificial context is secondary. In 1c the phrase *ántāḥ...pū́rve* "ancient limits"—the beginnings of the world—can also mean the "eastern limits," the limits from which the sacrificial area is measured. The reference to "heaven and earth" in pāda d confirms the cosmic context of this hemistich but without excluding sacrificial reference, for on the sacrificial ground heaven is represented by the Āhavanīya or "offering fire" in the east and earth by the Gārhapatya or "domestic fire" in the west. (Though those terms, ubiquitous in middle Vedic śrauta literature, are not used in the Ṛgveda of those two fires, the polarity of the two fires is clearly reflected in the Ṛgveda.)

In verse 2a there is again an ambiguity: *iṣṭá* may mean what is offered in sacrifice or what is wished for, and here both meanings are possible. But whose are these "offerings" or "wishes"? The seers represented in the constellation of the Seven Seers (vs. 2b) are the closest and best possibilities. The frame of reference would then be the cosmos. Or those offering or wishing may be the "ancient seers," who

The phrase must be significant, since the poet verbally recalls it in the last verse, when he anticipates that Viśvakarman will enjoy the "oblations" (*hávanāni*) offered to him. In 1c the description "seeking wealth with hope" refers to Viśvakarman's ritual activity, which carries the hope of prosperity for the sacrificer.

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X.82 (908) Viśvakarman

Viśvakarman Bhauvana
7 verses: triṣṭubh

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appear in verse 4. In that case the frame of reference is the sacrifice. That is to say, the first verses describe both the creation of the sacrifice and the creation of the world and thereby link the creation of the sacrifice to the creation of the world.

Whatever it is that Viśvakarman represents is central to these creations. He is initially set beyond both the sacrifice and the cosmos as the "father" of poetic vision and of the sun. But then in verse 2 he spreads throughout the sacrifice and the world. Verse 2ab puns on his name *Viśvakarman*, repeating its first syllable by the prefix *vi-* in *vímanā* "vast in mind," *víhāyā* "vast in power," and *vidhātā* "vast distributor"—the last, the one who distributes widely. The opposite of *vi-*, literally "apart," is *sam-* "together, completely," and the latter replaces *vi-* in 2bc in *samdṛś* "full manifestation," a cosmic term, and *sám √mad* "fully invigorate," a sacrificial term. The lexical shifts create the sense that Viśvakarman first extends throughout the sacrifice and the cosmos and then condenses in a perceptible form.

In the latter part of the poem, in verses 5–7, the poet explores the manifest forms that Viśvakarman has taken. The best clue to the forms of Viśvakarman is the reference repeated in verses 5 and 6 to "the first embryo" that the waters received and in which all the gods were manifest and gathered. That first embryo can represent any or all of three realities. First, on the cosmic plane, it can be the sun, which rises out of the waters. Thus Viśvakarman would be initially the father of the sun and then, in manifest form, the sun itself. Second, on the sacrificial plane, the embryo can be fire, or more specificially the sacrificial fire, which is the "child of the waters" (*apāṃ nápāt*) and the form in which the presence of the gods at the sacrifice is manifested. And third, perhaps uniting cosmos and sacrifice, the embryo can be the king, who is reborn as the sun or as a sun-like being by means of the unction waters in the royal consecration rite. For a clearer reference to such imagery in the royal consecration rite, see X.121.

1. The father of the eye, for he is insightful in mind, gave birth to the ghee
   and the two that repeatedly bob up and down [=two ladles/heaven
   and earth].
   Only when the ancient [/eastern] limits were fixed, only then did heaven
   and earth spread out.
2. Viśvakarman is vast in mind and vast in power, the distributor—the vast
   distributor—and the highest full manifestation.
   Their offerings [/wishes] are fully invigorated by nourishment where,
   beyond the Seven Seers [=the Big Dipper], they say the one is.
3. To him who is our father and progenitor, who is the vast distributor, who
   knows the domains and living beings, all of them,
   who is the giver of names to the gods, the one alone—to him go the
   other living beings to make peace.
4. Like singers, the ancient seers together won for him wealth in abundance
   by sacrifice—
   they who together created these creatures after the airy realm, sunlit and
   unsunlit, took its seat.

5. Was it beyond heaven, beyond this earth, beyond lords and gods?
   What first embryo did the waters receive, where all the gods appeared
   together?
6. Just this first embryo did the waters receive, where all the gods gathered
   together:
   the one fitted upon the navel of the unborn, that upon which all living
   beings have taken their places.
7. You [=other priests] will not find him who gave birth to these things. For
   you another thing has come between.
   Covered by mist and muttering, feeding on life, they wander about,
   reciting their solemn speech.

The next two hymns are dedicated to Battle Fury (Manyú) and assigned to a poet whose name is transparently derived from the hymn itself, Manyu Tāpasa, or Battle Fury, son of Fervor (for Fervor, see 83.2d).

X.83 (909) Battle Fury

Manyu Tāpasa
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1

This hymn begins with four verses praising Manyu for his might and victory-bringing qualities and entreating him to use these qualities against our enemies. The following three verses (5–7) strike a more personal note, with a 1st-person speaker, apparently deserted by Manyu for some undetermined reason. The speaker begs Manyu to return to his side, so that together they can smite the enemy.

1. Who has done honor to you, o Battle Fury—you mace, you missile—he
   prospers in due order in all victorious might and strength.
   Might we be victorious over Dāsa and Ārya with you as yokemate, with
   victorious might, created by might, possessing might.
2. Battle Fury was Indra, just Battle Fury was (every?) god; Battle Fury was
   the Hotar, Varuṇa, Jātavedas.
   Battle Fury do the clans that stem from Manu reverently invoke. Protect
   us, Battle Fury, in concert with Fervor.
3. Attack, Battle Fury, stronger than strong. With Fervor as yokemate
   smite away our rivals.
   Foe-smiting, obstacle-smiting, and Dasyu-smiting, bring all good things
   here to us.
4. For you, Battle Fury, having overwhelming strength, are self-generated
   Wrath, victorious over hostility.
   Common to all domains, victorious, possessing victorious might, confer
   strength on us in battle.

5. Being without a portion, I have gone off far away, because of your intention, you forceful and discerning one.
   Unintentionally I have angered you, Battle Fury. In your own person come to me to give me power.
6. Here I am—yours! Come right up here near to me face to face, o victorious one who suckles all.
   Battle Fury, mace-bearer; turn here toward me—we two shall smite the Dasyus—and be mindful of your friend.
7. Go forth on attack: be on my right side. Then we shall keep smiting obstacles in abundance.
   I offer to you the foundation and the top of the honey. We two shall both first drink silently.

X.84 (910) Battle Fury

Manyu Tāpasa
7 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, jagatī 4–7

Like the last hymn, this one is a simple address to Manyu "Battle Fury" asking for his aid in our battles, as well as in the division of the spoils. Rhetorically the hymn is characterized by verbal chaining: almost every verse ends with a word picked up by the very beginning of the next verse. Thus, "fire" in 1d/2a, "alone" 3d/4a, "victory" 4d/5a, "ready to hand" 5d/6a, "pour in" 6d/7a; only 2d/3a lacks this concatenation.

1. Let them go forth on attack on the same chariot with you, o Battle Fury, you Marut-friend—doing damage, bristling with excitement, emboldened,
   possessing sharp arrows, having honed their weapons—the superior men with fire's form.
2. Flaring like fire, o Battle Fury, be victorious. Be our army-leader, victorious one, when you are invoked.
   On smiting our rivals, share out their possessions. Showing the measure of your strength, shove aside the scorners.
3. Vanquish hostility for us, Battle Fury. Breaking, crushing, crushing out, advance on our rivals.
   Formidable is your dimension: they have never confined it. Exerting your will, you lead at will, you who are born alone.
4. You alone are reverently invoked by many, Battle Fury. Hone every clan for battle.
   O one of unbroken brilliance, with you as yokemate we raise our heavenly cry for victory.

5. Creating victory like Indra, without talking us down, Battle Fury, become our overlord here.
   We hymn your dear name, victorious one. We know the wellspring whence you came to be ready to hand.
6. Born together with readiness, you mace, you missile, you bear highest victorious might, o overwhelming one.
   (Born?) together with your resolve, share the fat with us, Battle Fury, at the pouring in of great spoils, o much-invoked one.
7. The spoils, both those that have poured in and those that have been collected, let Battle Fury and Varuṇa give to us.
   Let our rivals, having set fear in their own hearts, defeated, hide themselves away.

With X.85 begins the series of individual hymns that will last to the end of the Xth Maṇḍala.

X.85 (911) Wedding

Sūryā Sāvitrī
47 verses: anuṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 14, 19–21, 23–24, 26, 36–37, 44; jagatī 18, 27, 43; urobṛhatī 34

This first hymn of the single-hymn group, long and episodic, treats the domestic ritual of the wedding. Many of the verses are found also in the Atharvaveda (Śaunaka) wedding hymns (XIV.1–2) and are utilized in the gṛhya sūtras (the protocols of the domestic rituals) in the wedding rite.

It begins (vss. 1–19) with a fairly coherent account of the wedding of Sūryā, the Daughter of the Sun, whose marriage serves as the prototype of human marriage. She is also named by the Anukramaṇī as the author of the hymn, a clearly fanciful ascription. The bridegroom is Soma, and the first five verses are devoted to asserting that this is not the familiar earthly soma, the ritual drink (see esp. vss. 3–4), but rather the celestial Soma—here identified for the first time as the moon, an identification that becomes standard later. The waning and waxing of the moon are referred to in verse 5, and probably cryptically in the first part of verse 4, in the puzzling adjective "those whose regulation is sheltering" (*ācháḍvidhāna*), using an idiom otherwise used for the regulation of the months and seasons (e.g., in vs. 18).

The next verses (6–12) employ a style familiar from the Atharvaveda and from middle Vedic prose, a structured series of identifications between cosmic and everyday entities; the everyday entities here are the different features of the wedding, and especially the wedding vehicle. Much in these verses is unclear for several reasons. For one thing, workaday language is seldom found in these high-culture texts, and

so the words for the members of the wedding party and the pieces of the bridal finery and wedding cart are unfamiliar. Moreover, the cosmic comparanda are difficult to penetrate as they seem to refer to unidentified astronomical bodies and movements. Verses 13–16 focus on a single episode in the marriage ritual, the "wooing." Judging from later practice, the bridegroom's party sends several males to the potential bride's home, to ask her father and other male members of the family for her as bride for the man they represent. This part of the ceremony begins with the wooers identifying themselves by name and lineage—the "pointing out" of verse 15. In this hymn the Aśvins are the wooers, arriving on their characteristic three-wheeled chariot, whose wheels provide the topic for a series of (presumably astronomical) riddles (vss. 15–16). (For further discussion see Jamison 1996a: 222–24.) After a verse of homage (17), this part of the hymn ends with two further verses of riddles about the sun and moon (18–19).

After this long, more-or-less self-contained mythological and cosmological opening the hymn continues with verses more appropriate to the current, human wedding. Verses 20–27 contain a somewhat jumbled treatment of the wedding, from the wooing to the arrival in the new home, beginning with an invitation to mount the wedding vehicle (vs. 20), perhaps placed here because it has connections with the Sūryā section. Verses 21–22 are addressed to a Gandharva (a type of lubricious demigod, thought to target unmarried girls), declaring the new wife off-limits. Verse 23 seems to collapse the earlier journey to the wooing and the journey to the new home, while the following two verses (24–25) concern the ceremony itself: at least in the later ritual the wife is briefly bound with a cord, as a symbolic initiation parallel to the initiation of a young Ārya boy. (See Jamison 1996a: 42–48.) Finally, in verses 26–27 we reach the journey to the new home and good wishes for the new mistress of the household.

Verses 28–35 are a strange, sinister, and menacing interlude between the generally happy tone of the first part of the hymn and the blessings with which it closes. These, especially verses 28–30 and 34–35, are also the most discussed and disputed verses in the hymn. Let us dispose of the relatively unproblematic verses 31–33 first. These concern the possible dangers of the wedding journey: diseases emanating from the spectators of the procession (vs. 31) and robbers and other hazards (vs. 32). In verse 33 the spectators are allowed to look at the bride and wish her good luck, but then ordered home.

It is generally agreed that the three preceding verses (28–30) have to do with the deflowering of the bride, though there is much disagreement about details. Verse 28, it seems, begins with the announcement of the blood-stained sheet or garment, the all-important sign that the bride was a virgin. But the rest of this verse and the two verses following do not treat this as an altogether positive outcome, especially for the groom. Because the bride was a virgin, the marriage is valid, so her relatives are pleased (28c)—but the new husband is trapped. The bride becomes a noose (like the old sexist American slang expression "ball-and-chain" for a wife), and he is bound in her bonds. She also becomes witchcraft embodied (28b, 29c). In our view this refers to the unnerving and dangerous hold that sex, in the person of his wife, will exert over the husband. (Compare American English "that old black magic" for sexual attraction and desire.) He is not only legally but also mentally bound, and this hold is also expressed by the paradoxical "the wife enters her husband" at the end of verse 29. Though the sexual act of course happens the other way—husband enters wife—symbolically she enters him: she has penetrated his defenses, gotten "under his skin." The first half of verse 29 is unconnected with this emotional transformation; instead it simply continues the legal and social ramifications of the consummated marriage. With most commentators (*pace* Falk [1993], who thinks it is the sable pelt worn by the groom), we interpret the *śāmulyàm* of 29a as the stained garment of the bride, now to be disposed of. Pāda b treats the gifts to be given to the priests who officiated at the ceremony. In verse 30 we return to the groom's compromised physical and emotional state: sex, especially this first sex of marriage, is making him weakened and vulnerable, his naked flesh "glistening in an evil way," perhaps with sexual fluids. The theme of the garment found in literal terms in verses 28–29 acquires a somewhat shocking metaphorical twist in the second half of verse 30, where sexual intercourse is depicted as the husband dressing his penis in the "garment," that is, the body, of the bride.

After this emotional binge, the dangers of the road in verses 31–33 seem rather minor! (The journey verses may have been interpolated here because the diseases of vs. 31 are reminiscent of the groom's physical state in vs. 30.) But menace returns in verse 34, where an unidentified object is ascribed all sorts of harmful qualities. Only a brahmin can neutralize them. Similarly, in verse 35 various violent actions are depicted, which a brahmin can absolve. Most commentators have considered the object in verse 34 to be the stained garment of the bride, and the actions in verse 35 to have been performed on the garment to sanitize it. We think this unlikely; instead we consider these two verses to concern the wedding feast and in particular the cow killed for the feast. Just as the sex of verses 28–30 involved violence, surrender, and the breaking of taboos, so the slaughter of a cow to be eaten at the celebration requires the same ambivalently viewed actions and in a sense is a public representation of the private violation of deflowering. But brahmins who understand "Sūryā," that is, the nature of marriage, including its negative qualities, can safely eat the offered cow.

Verses 36–37 depict a far more benign husband than the tortured one of verses 28–30 and one more uncomplicatedly eager for sex. These verses lead into the famous series (38–41) about the previous, divine husbands of the wife. The final six verses (42–47) are simply expressed blessings of the married couple and of the new wife.

1. By reality is the earth propped up; by the sun is heaven propped up.
   By truth do the Ādityas stand, and Soma is fixed in heaven.
2. By Soma the Ādityas are strong; by truth is the earth great.
   And in the lap of these heavenly bodies Soma is set.

3. A man thinks he has drunk the soma when they crush the plant.
But the Soma that the formulators know—no one at all consumes that.
4. Protected by those whose regulation is sheltering, guarded by those belonging to heights, o Soma,
you just stay listening to the pressing stones. No earth-dweller consumes you.
5. When they take their first drink of you, god, after that you swell up again.
Vāyu is the guardian of Soma. The moon is the model of the years.
6. Raibhī was (the female attendant) to be given along (with the bride), Nārāśaṃsī the in-dweller.
Sūryā's auspicious garment goes adorned with a song.
7. Perception was the pillow, the eye was the adorning salve,
Heaven and Earth were the bucket (seat), when Sūryā drove to her husband.
8. The praise songs were the crossbars, meter the veil and headdress.
The Aśvins were the wooers of Sūryā and Agni was the leader.
9. Soma was the bridegroom; the Aśvins were both wooers,
when Savitar gave Sūryā to her husband, as she pronounced (her vow) with her (whole) mind.
10. Mind was her wagon, and heaven was her canopy.
The two glowing ones [=sun and moon] were the draft-oxen, when Sūryā drove to her (new) home.
11. Your two oxen, harnessed by verse and tune [/ṛc and sāman], went of one accord.
The ear was your two wheels. The path to heaven meandered back and forth.
12. The two gleaming ones [=Heaven and Earth?] were your two wheels as you drove. Breath was hammered in as the axle.
Sūryā mounted the wagon made of mind, as she went forth to her husband.
13. Sūryā's wedding proceeded, when Savitar set it going.
In the Aghā's the cows are killed; in the two Arjunī's she is conveyed (to her new home).
14. When, o Aśvins, you two drove with a three-wheeled (chariot) to the wedding of Sūryā to ask for her,
all the gods then gave assent to you two. The son Pūṣan chose you as his two fathers.
15. When you drove, you two lords of beauty, to Sūryā to woo her,
where was your single wheel; where did you stand for the pointing out?
16. Your two wheels, o Sūryā—the brahmins know (them) according to their season.
But the one wheel that is hidden—that just the experts know.

17. To Sūryā, to the gods, to Mitra and Varuṇa—
those who are forethoughtful of creation—to them I have made this obeisance here.
18. First in front, then behind, these two roam by their magic power. As two playful children, they travel around their ceremonial course.
The one [=Sun] watches over all creatures; the other [=Moon] is born again (and again) as he portions out the seasons.
19. He becomes ever new as he is born; as beacon of the days he goes at the forefront of the dawns.
He portions out their share to the gods as he comes here. The Moon extends his lifetime long.
20. Lovely with *kiṃśuka* flowers, (made of) *śalmali* wood, having all forms, of golden color, well-turning, well-wheeled—
mount, o Sūryā, the world of immortality. Make your wedding procession a comfortable place for your husband.
21. "Rise up from here, for this woman has a husband." I call on Viśvāvasu with reverence, with hymns.
"Seek some other girl sitting in (the house of) her father, adorned (for marriage) [/smeared (with menstrual blood)]. That is your share by nature. Know this."
22. "Rise up from here, Viśvāvasu." With reverence we invoke you.
"Seek some other burgeoning maiden. Send the wife to join with her husband."
23. Let the paths be straight and harmless to men, by which the comrades go to the wooing.
Aryaman and Bhaga should lead us all together. Let the united household be easy to hold fast, o gods.
24. I release you from the fetter of Varuṇa, with which well-disposed Savitar bound you.
In the womb of truth, in the world of the well-performed (sacrifice?) I place you unharmed along with your husband.
25. I release (her) from here, not from yonder. I have made her well bound yonder,
so that, o Indra the rewarder, this woman here will have good sons, good fortune.
26. Let Pūṣan lead you from here, having taken you by the hand. Let the Aśvins convey you forth in their chariot.
Go to the house, so that you will be mistress of the house. Exerting your will you will announce the ceremonial distribution.
27. Here let your heart's desire be realized through children; here in this house be vigilant for the ruling of your household.
With this husband merge your body. Then (even) as an elderly couple you two will announce the ceremonial distribution.

28. It [=bride's garment] becomes dark red. [She=bride] becomes
witchcraft, a noose. She is smeared (with blood).
Her relatives are elated; her husband is bound in bonds.
29. Hand over the stained garment; to the brahmins parcel out the goods.
She herself has become walking witchcraft: the wife enters her
husband.
30. His body loses its splendor—glistening in that evil way—
when the husband is about to put on his own member the "garment" of
the bride.

31. The diseases from the people that follow after the glittering wedding
procession of the bride,
those let the gods worthy of the sacrifice lead back again whence
they came.
32. Let highwaymen who lie in wait not find the married couple.
Let them cross over the hard place by easy roads. Let hostilities
run away.
33. Of good omen is this bride here: together approach her, behold her.
Having given good luck to her, then scatter away home.

34. This is rough; this is sharp, barbed, poisonous: it is not for eating.
The brahmin who would know Sūryā, only he deserves this thing
associated with the bride(groom).
35. Carving up, carving open, and then cutting apart:
behold the forms of Sūryā! But the brahmin makes them clean.

36. I grasp your hand for good fortune, so that with me as your husband
you will reach old age.
Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar, Plenitude—(all) the gods—have given you to
me for the ruling of the household.
37. Pūṣan, rouse her, most kindly disposed—(she) in whom humans scatter
their seed,
(she) who will willingly spread apart her thighs for us, (she) in whom we
can willingly thrust our penis.
38. To you at first they conveyed Sūryā along with her wedding procession.
Give the wife back to her husbands, Agni, along with progeny.
39. Agni has given the wife back, along with lifetime and luster, (to him)
who as her husband will live, long-lived, through a hundred autumns.
40. Soma acquired (you) first; the Gandharva acquired (you) next.
Agni was your third husband. The fourth was human-born.
41. Soma gave (her) to the Gandharva; the Gandharva gave (her) to Agni.
Agni has given both wealth and sons to me, and also this woman here.

42. Stay just here, (you two); don't go apart. Attain your entire lifespan,
playing with your sons and grandsons, rejoicing in your own house.

43. Let Prajāpati generate progeny for us. Let Aryaman anoint (you?) till
old age.
Without ill-omen enter the world of your husband. Be weal for our
two-footed, weal for our four-footed.
44. Be free from the evil eye, not husband-smiting, kindly to the livestock,
of good mind and good luster,
hero-bearing, god-loving, comfortable. Be weal for our two-footed,
weal for our four-footed.
45. Make this woman here, o Indra the rewarder, possessed of good sons
and of good fortune.
Confer ten sons on her: make her husband the eleventh.
46. Become sovereign queen over your father-in-law; become sovereign
queen over your mother-in-law.
Become sovereign queen over your sister-in-law, sovereign queen over
your brothers-in-law.
47. Let all the gods jointly and jointly the waters anoint our two hearts.
Together Mātariśvan, together the Disposer, together the Director—let
them join us two together.

X.86 (912) Vṛṣākapi (Conversation of Vṛṣākapi Aindra, Indrāṇī, and Indra)

Indra (1, 8, 11–12, 14, 19–22), Indrāṇī (2–6, 9–10, 15–18), Vṛṣākapi Aindra (7, 13, 23) [per the Anukramaṇī]
23 verses: paṅkti

This dialogue hymn was called by Renou "the strangest poem in the Ṛgveda" ("le poème le plus étrange du RV," 1956: 246). The three participants in the dialogue are Indra, his wife Indrāṇī, and his raffish monkey pal Vṛṣākapi, who is making sexual advances to Indrāṇī. The hymn contains startlingly explicit sexual discourse, as well as a dazzling array of apparent non-sequiturs, all embedded in an exaltation of Indra, signaled by its consistent refrain.

Not surprisingly its meaning and web of references have been the subject of much controversy; we cannot discuss the many conflicting interpretations here. However, in our opinion many of the puzzles can be solved if it is interpreted as an oblique treatment of the Aśvamedha (Horse Sacrifice) ritual, a royal ritual in which, according to the middle Vedic ritual texts, the chief queen copulates with the sacrificed horse to increase and magnify the power of the king, her husband. In this reading, the monkey represents the horse, with whom Indrāṇī must have sexual relations. She both indignantly rejects and also encourages Vṛṣākapi's advances in the course of the hymn, and after their ritual copulation she is called "wife of Vṛṣākapi" (vs. 13). The power of her husband Indra, the king, is extended by the

performance of this ritual, though he has been, in effect, cuckolded. Hence the paradoxical announcement in verse 17, which proclaims the sexual "loser" the real master. For a detailed discussion of the hymn in the context of the Aśvamedha, see Jamison (1996a: 74–88).

The hymn begins with Indra's complaint that he is no longer receiving honor or soma, a statement echoed by his wife (vss. 1–2). The falling off of ritual observance sets the stage for the performance of an Aśvamedha, for Indra to regain his position. The topic then shifts to Vṛṣākapi (vss. 3–6), whose friendship with Indra is clearly a bone of contention between the married couple. Indrāṇī reveals in annoyance that he has made advances to her, but then, in a startling descent into vulgar speech, boasts of her own sexual prowess (vs. 6). Vulgarity is matched by vulgarity in Vṛṣākapi's first entry into the conversation (vs. 7), where he responds to her implicit invitation. These two verses may well verbally signal the sexual activity between them, the climactic moment of interspecies pairing that mimics the Aśvamedha. The next two verses (8–9), presumably spoken by Indra and Indrāṇī, may well be a humorous reflection of this intercourse, which may appear to Indra as spectator more like vexation than pleasure.

In our view, the next two verses (10–11) are spoken by the narrator, proclaiming Indrāṇī's important new ritual status, as the queen ensuring the life and prosperity of her husband Indra. (The Anukramaṇī assigns them to Indra.) Indra then laments the loss of his friend (vs. 12), who is going to the gods as sacrificial offering, but rejoices in the renewed sacrificial offerings he himself is receiving (vss. 13–14). In these verses he addresses his wife both as Indrāṇī ("wife of Indra," vs. 12) and Vṛṣākapāyī ("wife of Vṛṣākapi," vs. 13), for by her copulation with the monkey she became his temporary ritual wife. The narrator affirms the renewal of soma offering to Indra in verse 15, rectifying the lapse in ritual attentions noted in verse 1.

The two responsive verses that follow (16–17) are the heart of the hymn and the best support for and justification of the Aśvamedha. The first contains what would be a universally accepted truism: the sexually successful male is the master and has the power. But this is trumped by the paradoxical reversal: the sexually successful male does not have the power; it's the unsuccessful one who is master. This statement is beautifully applicable to the Aśvamedha: the king is cuckolded by a horse (or, in this case, a monkey) and is witness to this humiliating act, but the king also receives all the benefit from the ritual, which increases his power, while the sexual partner of the queen is sacrificed.

With this pair of verses the hymn has reached its high point and conveyed its message. The remaining verses are something of a letdown. The next five (vss. 18–22) are an extended pun, relating the yearlong journey of the horse/monkey before the sacrifice with its journey to the gods after its sacrifice. The final puzzling verse (23) superficially has nothing to do with the rest of the hymn, but relates a miraculous birth from the daughter of Manu, who has the speaking name "Rib." The deeper connection must be the explosive fertility that the performance of the Aśvamedha should confer on its participants. For discussion of this verse in an Indo-European context, see Watkins (2004).

The Aśvamedha is treated more directly in two hymns in Maṇḍala I, I.162 and 163.

1. [Indra:] "Because they have left off pressing (soma), they have stopped honoring Indra as god,
(in the places) where my comrade Vṛṣākapi was getting high on the goodies of the stranger."
– Above all Indra!
2. [Indrāṇī:] "But although, o Indra, you run away, beyond the wayward course of Vṛṣākapi,
you do not find anywhere else for soma-drinking."
– Above all Indra!
3. [Indra:] "What has this tawny beast Vṛṣākapi done to you—
or to the thriving goods of the stranger—that you are jealous of him?"
– Above all Indra!
4. [Indrāṇī:] "This dear Vṛṣākapi of yours that you protect, o Indra—
the boar-hunting dog will snap at his ear."
– Above all Indra!
5. [Indrāṇī:] "The monkey has spoiled my dear (well-)fashioned and decorated (private parts).
I will break his head. I will not be easy-going for a bad actor."
– Above all Indra!
6. [Indrāṇī:] "No woman has a better bottom than me or gives better sex.
None is better at thrusting back than me, nor raises her thighs higher."
– Above all Indra!
7. [Vṛṣākapi:] "Hey mama, you easy little lay, I get how it's, like, really gonna be.
My bottom, mama, *my* thigh, *my* 'head' are gettin', like, excited."
– Above all Indra!
8. [Indra:] "Why, o well-armed, well-fingered, broad-braided, broad-backsided one—
why, o wife of a champion, do you vex our Vṛṣākapi?"
– Above all Indra!
9. [Indrāṇī:] "This noxious creature has designs on me, as if I lacked a man [/hero].
And I *have* a man [/hero]—with Indra as husband and the Maruts as companions."
– Above all Indra!
10. Up till now the woman has (just) been accustomed to come down to the joint offering or to the festive gathering.
Now she is magnified as the Adept of Truth, as one having a hero, with Indra as husband.
– Above all Indra!

11. I have heard of Indrāṇī as (most) fortunate among these women.
for never, even in the future, will her husband die of old age.
– Above all Indra!
12. [Indra:] "O Indrāṇī, I find no pleasure without my comrade Vṛṣākapi,
whose own dear watery oblation goes here and now to the gods."
– Above all Indra!
13. [Indra:] "O wife of Vṛṣākapi [=Indrāṇī], rich, having good sons and daughters-in-law,
Indra will eat your oxen and the dear oblation that brings about whatever (you want)."
– Above all Indra!
14. [Indra:] "For they cook fifteen, twenty oxen at a time for me.
And I eat only the fat meat. They fill both my cheeks."
– Above all Indra!
15. Like a sharp-horned bull constantly roaring within the herd,
the "stirred" (soma libation), which the one desiring prosperity presses for you, is weal for your heart, o Indra.
– Above all Indra!
16. [Indra:] "He is not master, whose penis hangs (limp) between his thighs.
He is master, for whose (penis) the hairy (vulva) gapes when it [=erect penis] has sat down."
– Above all Indra!
17. [Indrāṇī:] "He is not master, for whose (penis) the hairy (vulva) gapes when it [=erect penis] has sat down.
He is master, whose penis hangs (limp) between his thighs."
– Above all Indra!
18. O Indra, this Vṛṣākapi found a slaughtered ass,
a knife, a basket, a new pot, and a wagon piled with firewood.
– Above all Indra!
19. [Vṛṣākapi:] "Here I go earnestly looking, distinguishing between Dāsa and Ārya.
(While) I drink (the offering) of the guileless presser, I kept looking for the wise."
– Above all Indra!
20. [Indra:] "Wasteland and chasm—how many yojanas (of distance) are they away (from here).
Vṛṣākapi, come home, to the nearer houses."
– Above all Indra!
21. [Indrāṇī:] "Come here again, Vṛṣākapi. We two will arrange easy passages (for you),
who, as sleep-destroyer [/-attainer], go home again (to death) along the path."
– Above all Indra!

22. When, o Vṛṣākapi, o Indra, you (all) went upward toward home,
where was this beast of many misdeeds, to whom did the effacer of men go?
– Above all Indra!
23. Manu's daughter, Parśu ("Rib") by name, gave birth to twenty at once.
(Good) fortune indeed was there for her whose belly (labor-pain) vexed.
– Above all Indra!

X.87 (913) Agni Demon-Smiter

Pāyu Bhāradvāja
25 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 22–25

A departure from the usual themes of Agni hymns (though quite reminiscent of the second half of I.36 and to a lesser extent X.118), this long hymn is entirely devoted to Agni as "demon-smiter" (*rakṣohán*), the first word of the hymn, and especially to his violent pursuit of "sorcerers" (*yātudhā́na*). The language is gleefully and creatively bloodthirsty, crediting Agni with a large arsenal of weapons, mostly based on the shape of his flames, and of means of violent destruction of the enemy (piercing, crushing, shattering, disemboweling, etc.). The vividness of the language is enhanced by the fact that, after the first verse, Agni is always addressed in the 2nd person and almost always with imperatives. (Only vss. 15 and 18 lack direct address to Agni, though he is lurking in the background. These two verses are also the only ones in which any other gods are allowed a part of the action.)

Agni's connection with ritual is barely mentioned in the hymn. In verse 1 the poet sprinkles him with ghee, addresses him, and kindles him, in order to ensure his protection, and in verse 4 it is made clear that the murderous power of Agni's weapons comes from the sacrifice and the associated ritual speech. That Agni's fierce and aggressive protection of us stems from our ritual behavior toward him should be kept in mind—though it must be admitted that the poet seems to forget this fact for long stretches of the hymn.

Lexical repetition and phonological figures, both simple and complex, are important features of the style of the hymn. To mention only one of the complex figures, the unusual participle *sphūrjáyan* "sizzling" (the only occurrence of this verb in the Ṛgveda) in 11c is echoed phonologically by *śaphārújam* "hoof-breaking" in 12b (and to a lesser extent by *dhū́rvantam* "damaging" in 12d).

The sheer exuberance of the hymn is contagious, at least to its translators.

1. The demon-smiter—I besprinkle him as the prizewinner; I beseech him as Mitra [/an ally] for broadest shelter.
Agni, sharpening himself, fully kindled according to (our) intentions—let him protect us from harm by day, let him by night.

11. I have heard of Indrāṇī as (most) fortunate among these women.
for never, even in the future, will her husband die of old age.
– Above all Indra!
12. [Indra:] "O Indrāṇī, I find no pleasure without my comrade Vṛṣākapi,
whose own dear watery oblation goes here and now to the gods."
– Above all Indra!
13. [Indra:] "O wife of Vṛṣākapi [=Indrāṇī], rich, having good sons and daughters-in-law,
Indra will eat your oxen and the dear oblation that brings about whatever (you want)."
– Above all Indra!
14. [Indra:] "For they cook fifteen, twenty oxen at a time for me.
And I eat only the fat meat. They fill both my cheeks."
– Above all Indra!
15. Like a sharp-horned bull constantly roaring within the herd,
the "stirred" (soma libation), which the one desiring prosperity presses for you, is weal for your heart, o Indra.
– Above all Indra!
16. [Indra:] "He is not master, whose penis hangs (limp) between his thighs.
He is master, for whose (penis) the hairy (vulva) gapes when it [=erect penis] has sat down."
– Above all Indra!
17. [Indrāṇī:] "He is not master, for whose (penis) the hairy (vulva) gapes when it [=erect penis] has sat down.
He is master, whose penis hangs (limp) between his thighs."
– Above all Indra!
18. O Indra, this Vṛṣākapi found a slaughtered ass,
a knife, a basket, a new pot, and a wagon piled with firewood.
– Above all Indra!
19. [Vṛṣākapi:] "Here I go earnestly looking, distinguishing between Dāsa and Ārya.
(While) I drink (the offering) of the guileless presser, I kept looking for the wise."
– Above all Indra!
20. [Indra:] "Wasteland and chasm—how many yojanas (of distance) are they away (from here).
Vṛṣākapi, come home, to the nearer houses."
– Above all Indra!
21. [Indrāṇī:] "Come here again, Vṛṣākapi. We two will arrange easy passages (for you),
who, as sleep-destroyer [/-attainer], go home again (to death) along the path."
– Above all Indra!

22. When, o Vṛṣākapi, o Indra, you (all) went upward toward home,
where was this beast of many misdeeds, to whom did the effacer of men go?
– Above all Indra!
23. Manu's daughter, Parśu ("Rib") by name, gave birth to twenty at once.
(Good) fortune indeed was there for her whose belly (labor-pain) vexed.
– Above all Indra!

X.87 (913) Agni Demon-Smiter

Pāyu Bhāradvāja
25 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 22–25

A departure from the usual themes of Agni hymns (though quite reminiscent of the second half of I.36 and to a lesser extent X.118), this long hymn is entirely devoted to Agni as "demon-smiter" (*rakṣohán*), the first word of the hymn, and especially to his violent pursuit of "sorcerers" (*yātudhā́na*). The language is gleefully and creatively bloodthirsty, crediting Agni with a large arsenal of weapons, mostly based on the shape of his flames, and of means of violent destruction of the enemy (piercing, crushing, shattering, disemboweling, etc.). The vividness of the language is enhanced by the fact that, after the first verse, Agni is always addressed in the 2nd person and almost always with imperatives. (Only vss. 15 and 18 lack direct address to Agni, though he is lurking in the background. These two verses are also the only ones in which any other gods are allowed a part of the action.)

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Lexical repetition and phonological figures, both simple and complex, are important features of the style of the hymn. To mention only one of the complex figures, the unusual participle *sphūrjáyan* "sizzling" (the only occurrence of this verb in the Ṛgveda) in 11c is echoed phonologically by *śaphārújam* "hoof-breaking" in 12b (and to a lesser extent by *dhū́rvantam* "damaging" in 12d).

The sheer exuberance of the hymn is contagious, at least to its translators.

1. The demon-smiter—I besprinkle him as the prizewinner; I beseech him as Mitra [/an ally] for broadest shelter.
Agni, sharpening himself, fully kindled according to (our) intentions—
let him protect us from harm by day, let him by night.

2. Possessing jaws of metal, (first) brush the sorcerers with your flame, o Jātavedas, when fully kindled.
(Then) with your tongue seize hold of those who have fools for gods. Having wrenched the flesh-eaters, stick them in your mouth.
3. You who have (teeth) in both, bring both jaws close together, the upper and the lower, as you sharpen (them), with murderous intent.
Encircle (them) in the midspace, o king, and set upon the sorcerers altogether with your fangs.
4. Fitting your arrows to the bow with sacrifices, o Agni, and smearing their shafts along with their points with speech,
with these pierce the sorcerers in the heart. Break their arms, turned against (us), in turn.
5. Agni, split the skin of the sorcerer. Let the murderous (arrow-)point smite him with its blaze.
Cleave his joints, Jātavedas. When he is hewn apart, let the flesh-eater, craving his bloody flesh, open him up.
6. When now you see him standing still or moving about, o Agni Jātavedas, or flying along the paths in the midspace, as archer pierce him with your missile, sharpening it.
7. And, Jātavedas, with your spears recover what was seized, from the sorcerer who seized it.
Constantly blazing in front, o Agni, smite him down. Let the mottled vultures that eat raw meat eat him.
8. Proclaim here, o Agni, whichever is the one who is the sorcerer who does this.
Seize him with your firebrand, o youngest one. Make him subject to the eye of the one with his eye on men.
9. With your sharp eye, Agni, guard the sacrifice. Lead it forth to the east for the good (gods), o forethoughtful one.
Let the sorcerers not deceive you, ever blazing against the demonic powers with your murderous intent, o you with your eye on men.
10. With your eye on men, look all over for the demonic among the clans. Shatter his three points.
Agni, with your blaze cleave his ribs, and hew the root of the sorcerer into three parts.
11. Three times let the sorcerer who smites truth with untruth meet your onslaught, o Agni.
Sizzling him with your flame, o Jātavedas, wrench him down for the singer before his very eyes.
12. O Agni, in the hoarse-voiced (singer) fix that eye with which you see the hoof-breaking sorcerer.
Like an Atharvan fire-priest, with your divine light burn down the unobservant (sorcerer) who injures the true.

13. What today two opponents will utter as curses (at each another), o Agni, what harshness of speech those with hoarse voices will give birth to,
what missile is born from the mind's fury, with that pierce the sorcerers in the heart.
14. Pound away the sorcerers with your heat; pound away the demonic with your blaze, o Agni.
Pound away those who have fools for gods with your flame and away those who steal life, ever blazing against them.
15. Let the gods pound away the crooked man today, and let his harsh curses come back on him.
Let their missiles reach the man thieving with speech at his vulnerable spot. Let the sorcerer meet the onslaught of every (god).
16. The sorcerer who anoints himself with the bloody flesh of men, who (does so) with horseflesh,
who carries off the milk of the fertile cow—chop off their heads with your blaze, o Agni.
17. A year's worth of the milk of the ruddy cow: let the sorcerer not eat of that, o you with your eye on men.
Whoever seeks to gorge himself on [/steal] the beestings, with your flame pierce him face-to-face in his vulnerable spot, o Agni.
18. Let the sorcerers drink cows' poison. Let those of evil ways be cut down before Aditi [/Innocence].
Let the god Savitar hand them over. Let them be despoiled of their portion of plants.
19. From of old, Agni, you crush the sorcerers; demonic powers have never conquered you in battles.
Burn up the flesh-eaters together with their roots [/with their fools (for gods)]. Let them not escape your divine lance.
20. Guard us from below and from above, Agni, from behind and from in front.
Let these unaging, hottest (flames) of yours, ever blazing, burn against the man who speaks evil.
21. From behind, from in front, from below, and from above—as a poet with your poetic skill protect us all around, o king.
O comrade, (protect) your comrade, as an unaging one (protect him to attain) old age. O Agni, as an immortal (protect) us who are mortal.
22. We would set you, the inspired poet, all around (us) as our fortress, o mighty Agni,
displaying bold color every day, smiter of (the demonic powers) along with their wreckage—
23. With poison (smite) them along with their wreckage. Burn against the demons
with your sharp flame, Agni, and with your spears with their scorching tips.

24. Burn against the pair of sorcerers, the two worm-eaters.
I sharpen you, the undeceivable—awaken!—with my thoughts, o inspired poet.
25. Shatter his blaze with your blaze in all directions, o Agni.
Break apart the strength of the demon sorcerer and his manliness.

X.88 (914) Sūrya and Vaiśvānara

Mūrdhanvant Āṅgirasa or Vāmadevya
19 verses: triṣṭubh

Two simultaneous superimpositions structure this hymn. On the one hand, the present-day sacrifice involving the establishment of the ritual fire and the pouring of oblations into it is contrasted with the primal production of the sacrificial fire by the gods. The present-day sacrifice begins (vs. 1ab) and ends (vs. 19) the hymn, and periodically surfaces throughout (vss. 3, 5, 14). However, the dominant strain is the primordial one, which begins in the second half of verse 1; the role of the gods in creating the original sacrifice and "begetting" the sacrificial fire is especially emphasized in verses 4 and the long sequence of 7–13, where the phrase "the gods begot" appears four times (vss. 8–10, 13), alongside similar expressions. This thematic strain is especially striking because the gods are also regularly identified as "worthy of the sacrifice" (vss. 3, 6, 11, 13; see also 5, where Agni is so called), that is, worthy of *receiving* the sacrifice, while they are in fact *performing* the sacrifice.

The other theme of superimposition is the identification of Agni, especially under the epithet Vaiśvānara "belonging to all men," with the sun. At first the sun's dependence on and complementarity with Agni is mentioned (vss. 1b, 2, 6): the sun only becomes visible and begins to shine when Agni is also visible. But the cosmos-filling radiance and heat of Agni (see vss. 3, 5, 7, 9) leads gradually to the premise that the gods created Agni *as* the sun, expressed clearly in verses 10–13. The poet then acknowledges Agni as the sun (vs. 14) and in enigmatic language describes the two paths between heaven and earth along which the sun / cosmic fire moves (vss. 15–16).

The last three verses (17–19) seem to provide a simultaneous transition from the cosmic and primordial elements in the superimposed structures to the present-day everyday—by way of a dialogue between two unnamed participants. Most interpreters (e.g., Geldner and Renou) identify the speakers as two priests, probably the Brahman and Hotar who are explicitly mentioned in the last pāda of the last verse (19d). But the words that introduce the speakers in verse 17, *ávara* and *pára*, are ambiguous. They can mean "nearer" and "farther" (referring to the positions of the priests on the sacrificial ground), but they can also mean "lower" and "upper" / "below" and "above," as derivatives of these words do in verse 14. In verse 17 they can therefore refer to cosmic elements. It is our view that in verse

17 the dialogue is first presented as a debate between Earth and Heaven (which appear at the end of vs. 15 as the defining poles of the cosmos) about their roles in sacrifice, but the dialogue participants unobtrusively become transformed into present-day priests.

The final verse anchors us firmly in the here-and-now of the sacrifice, but also asserts that as long as the morning fire will be kindled and the dawns will dawn, the sacrifice as we know it will be performed. This assertion may involve a bit of propaganda. The term *brāhmaṇá* as the technical designation of a priest appears in this verse; this term was only introduced in the late Ṛgveda (as opposed to the earlier *brahmán* "formulator"), presumably as part of a codification and partial reorganization of the sacrificial system. The poet may then be claiming a long future for the new system, and implicitly suggesting its long history, stretching back to the origins of the world—cloaking a religious innovation in a garment of imagined tradition, as so often.

1. The oblation, the drink, unaging and delightful, has been poured into Agni, the one who finds the sun and touches heaven.
For him to bear and support the world, the gods spread out (the world) by their autonomous power.
2. The world was swallowed and hidden away by darkness; (then) the sun became manifest when Agni was born.
The gods, Earth and Heaven, and the waters and plants took pleasure in the fellowship of this one, of him.
3. Now urged on by the gods worthy of the sacrifice, I shall praise Agni, unaging and lofty,
who with his radiance stretches through earth and this heaven, through the two world-halves and the midspace.
4. He who was the first Hotar, delightful to the gods, whom they anointed with melted butter upon choosing him (as priest),
he made what flies and what goes (on foot), the still and the moving, to wax strong—Agni Jātavedas.
5. When, o Agni Jātavedas, you stood at the head of the world together with your light,
we spurred you on with thoughts, songs, and recitations. You became worthy of the sacrifice as the one filling the two world-halves.
6. Agni becomes the head of the world by night; thence is the sun born, rising early in the morning.
(Behold) this artful contrivance of those worthy of the sacrifice, that the swift one pursues his work, knowing the way.
7. He who shone brightly, beautiful to see in his greatness when fully kindled, the radiant one whose womb is in heaven—
in him, in Agni did all the gods, the protectors of bodies, pour the oblation with well-spoken speech.

8. The gods first begot well-spoken speech, after that the fire [/Agni], after that the oblation.
This became their sacrifice, the protector of bodies. That does Heaven know, that does Earth, that the waters.
9. The fire [/Agni] whom the gods begot, in whom all beings poured oblations,
aiming straight, he heated earth and this heaven with his flame in his greatness.
10. For with a praise song, with their powers the gods begot in heaven the fire [/Agni] that fills the world-halves.
And, for the sake of the world, they made him threefold. He ripens the plants of all forms.
11. When the gods worthy of the sacrifice set him in heaven as the Sun, the son of Aditi,
when the wandering pair [=Sun and Moon?] came into existence, only after that did all living beings see in front of (them).
12. For the sake of the whole world the gods made Agni Vaiśvānara the beacon of the days.
He who extends through the radiant dawns uncovers the darkness as he goes with his flame.
13. The gods, poets worthy of the sacrifice, begot unaging Agni Vaiśvānara, the primordial star, wandering but not confounding (the divine commandments), the mighty and lofty overseer of the wondrous apparition.
14. With mantras we address the poet Agni Vaiśvānara shining everywhere, the god who by his greatness encompasses the two wide (worlds) from below and from above.
15. I have heard from the forefathers that there are two routes, (that of) the gods and (that of) mortals.
Along those two everything that moves goes together, whatever is between the father [=Heaven] and the mother [=Earth].
16. Conjoined, the two carry the one that wanders, born from the head, stroked by mind.
He stands facing all beings: not keeping his distance, as, gleaming, he makes his transit.
17. When the lower [/nearer] one and the higher [/farther] one debate with each other, (they ask) "Of the two leaders of the sacrifice, which of us two knows it through and through?"
Have our comrades been able to achieve joint revelry? Have they realized the sacrifice? Who can proclaim this here?
18. "How many fires are there and how many suns? How many dawns, and how many waters?
O forefathers, I am not saying something two-faced to you: o poets, I am asking you in order to know."

19. For as long as the fine-feathered (mares [=flames?]) clothe themselves as if in the face of Dawn, o Mātariśvan,
for that long the Brahmin establishes (the fire), approaching the sacrifice and taking his seat near to the Hotar.

X.89 (915) Indra

Reṇu Vaiśvāmitra
18 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet's patronymic links him to the Viśvāmitra clan of the IIIrd Maṇḍala, and indeed the final verse (18) is the Viśvāmitra refrain, found in many of the Indra hymns of III (III.30.22, etc.). The penultimate verse (17d) mentions the Viśvāmitras, though that half-verse seems to have been borrowed from the Bharadvājas (VI.25.9). The poet appears to take his legacy quite seriously, for the hymn strikes one as self-consciously old-fashioned, a well-crafted Indo-Iranian praise poem, celebrating Indra's high cosmogonic deeds in carefully balanced rhetoric and beginning classically with the 1st-person subjunctive announcement "I shall praise Indra" (*índraṃ stavā*). The poet has also inherited the verbal cleverness appropriate to a proper ṛṣi: his similes and figures of speech are aptly deployed, and he knows how to mislead his audience and withhold information for surprise effect. This particular skill is clearest in verse 5, which appears to continue the praise of Indra, until we encounter as the first word of the second hemistich *sómaḥ*, the real subject of the verse.

In the second part of the hymn, beginning in verse 8, we encounter another theme dear to the Indo-Iranians: the punishment to be meted out to those who break or play false to their alliances or have no alliances at all. The word *mitrá* "alliance, ally, deified Alliance," alone or in compounds, appears seven times in verses 8–15, and is, of course, an element of the poet's ancestral name. Indra is repeatedly urged to punish the transgressors on behalf of the gods whose task is to maintain the proper relationships among men, namely Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman (see vss. 8–9). It is striking that, unlike in many Indra hymns, we don't simply call for Indra's aid in battle against whatever enemies oppose us; in this hymn our enemies are characterized as moral failures.

There is another way in which the poet appears to show his consciousness of his tradition—one that we might hesitantly call "intertextuality." In verse 14 the poet seems to be consciously citing, with some variation, the famous Indra-Vṛtra hymn I.32. He asks that after Indra's exercise of vengeance the enemies "will lie" in a certain way: *pṛthivyā́ āpṛ́g amuyā́ śáyante* "will lie there . . . in the (same) way (as) the embracer of the earth." It is difficult not to see this as a deliberate conflation of two famous phrases describing Vṛtra from I.32: 5d . . . *śayata upapṛ́k pṛthivyā́ḥ* "will lie as the embracer of the earth" and 8a . . . *amuyā́ śáyānam* "lying in that way." This quotation and conflation of phrases from a particular, and no

doubt well-known, poem seem quite different from the standard formulaic variation of our traditional poets, and it is perhaps not surprising to encounter it in the Xth Maṇḍala, as the practice of traditional poetic composition was drawing to a close.

1. I shall praise Indra, the most manly, who by his greatness forced apart the realms of light, apart the ends of the earth,
who, maintaining their boundaries, filled (them) in their expanses, projecting beyond the rivers in his greatness.
2. (As) the sun (turns) around the wide expanses, Indra should cause to turn here, like chariot wheels,
the one [=the sun?] that like a busy surge never stands still. He has smashed the black shades of darkness with his flaring.
3. Chant to him in the same old way a new sacred formulation that never turns away, without equal on earth and in heaven—
to Indra, who has distinguished the races of the stranger, like the (straight and crooked) backs (of horses), and need not seek (further for) a comrade.
4. For Indra I have raised my songs, (like) waters in restless surges from the depths of the sea,
for him who propped asunder earth and heaven with his powers, like wheels with an axle.
5. He who provides battle fury in his drink, whose first impression is sharp, the boisterous, vehement one with his arrows, who possesses the silvery drink—
Soma! All the bushes and trees have not deceived Indra as near-equivalents (of soma).
6. (To him [=Indra]), of whom neither heaven and earth, nor the dry land, nor the midspace, nor the mountains (are the equal), soma has flowed.
When his battle fury is being drawn forth, he cleaves the hard and shatters the firm.
7. He smote Vṛtra, like an axe the trees. He shattered the fortresses. He dug channels as if for rivers.
He split the mountain, just like a new pot. Together with his own yokemates, Indra made the cows his own.
8. It's just you, Indra, who are the insightful requiter of debts. As a knife does joints, you cleave the crooked (ways of those)
who violate the ordinances of Mitra and Varuṇa, as people violate a bound alliance.
9. Those of evil ways who transgress against Mitra [/an alliance] and against Aryaman, against agreements and against Varuṇa—
grind your bulging bullish ruddy weapon of death down on those without alliance (to us), o bullish Indra.

10. Indra is master of heaven and Indra of earth, Indra of the waters and Indra of the mountains,
Indra of the strong and Indra of the wise; Indra is to be called upon in peace and Indra in war.
11. Indra, the strong, projects beyond the nights and beyond the days, beyond the midspace and beyond the wellspring of the sea,
beyond the spreading of the wind and beyond the end of the earth, beyond the rivers and beyond the settlements.
12. Like the beacon of the ever-blazing dawn, let your insatiable missile go rolling forth, Indra.
Like a stone being launched from heaven, pierce with your hottest weapon those whose alliances are deceitful.
13. The months gave way to (him), the trees gave way, the plants gave way, the mountains gave way;
the two world-halves eagerly gave way to Indra; the waters gave way to him as he was being born.
14. When will vengeance be yours, Indra, such that you will rend the demonic power of the evil one, which besets (us),
and that those who bloody their allies will lie there like cows at slaughter, in the same way as (Vṛtra), embracer of the earth?
15. Those who, seeking to rival us, have battered at us, being greatly arrogant and powerful, o Indra—
let those without alliance (to us) keep company with blind darkness. The nights with their good lights should prevail over them.
16. Because the many soma-pressings of the peoples and the sacred formulations of the singing seers exhilarate you,
heeding this common call, with your help drive nearby, across all (others) as they chant.
17. In just this way, Indra, might we know your new favors that bring benefits.
And with your help, Indra, might we Viśvāmitras know this, as we sing just now at dawn.
18. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

X.90 (916) Puruṣa

Nārāyaṇa
16 verses: anuṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 16

This is one of the best-known and most influential hymns of the Ṛgveda. Its central symbol is the *púruṣa*, the "man," "person," or "human being." On the surface, this

hymn tells of the sacrifice of a giant man, from whose parts the world was created. The theme of creation through a cosmic sacrifice is widespread, but this hymn is not simply the retelling of an ancient tradition. The *púruṣa* here serves as a symbol of the sacrifice itself, which especially in the middle Vedic tradition is a locus of creative power. The *púruṣa* is thus similar to the later divine figure Prajāpati, who in the Brāhmaṇas personifies the sacrifice. Indeed this late hymn represents a verse commentary on the sacrifice that prefigures the prose commentaries of the Brāhmaṇas. This hymn is also notable because it is the only Ṛgvedic mention of the four varṇas, the hierarchical division of the social order that forms the theoretical basis for the caste system. One reason that the hymn may have been included in the Ṛgveda to provide a Ṛgvedic charter for such a division of society.

The identity of the Man and the sacrifice is established in the opening verse, for his thousand heads, eyes, and feet recall Agni, the sacrificial fire, and his macrocosmic equivalent, the Sun (cf. Brown 1931: 109–10). The Man comprehends the earth and extends beyond it. As Mus (1968: 549) has pointed out, the "ten-fingers' breadth" by which he exceeds the world measures from the Man's hairline to his mouth. The Man's mouth represents speech, which marks the boundary between the imperceptible world of thought and the perceptible world created by speech. His mouth is also associated with eating, and in verse 2 the Man rises beyond the world "through food," that is, by making the world his food. In later texts the "eater" is the master and the "eaten" is one who benefits the master (cf. Rau 1957: 34–35). The image may therefore reflect the Man's dominance over the world. See also X.125, in which the mouth is similarly both the locus of speech and the locus of eating.

This theme of dominance or rule continues also in verse 5 in the mutual generation of the Man and the Virāj. The word *virā́j* can mean either "brilliant" or "ruling, rule." The latter is the more likely sense here, and therefore this word connects the hymn to Vedic ideals of the king, who in his consecration encompasses the world in a similar way that the Man does here (Proferes 2007: esp. ch. 3). Since the term *virā́j* is grammatically feminine, it complements *púruṣa*, which is masculine in grammar and connotation.

The Man is the "offering" (vs. 6), the sacrificial victim (vs. 15), but more especially he is the sacrifice itself that the gods, the Sādhyas, and seers performed (vs. 7). Through this sacrifice the elements of subsequent sacrifices emerged: the "clotted-mixture" (vs. 8), the verses, chants, meters, and sacrificial formulae (vs. 9), and the sacrificial animals (vs. 10). The parts of the sacrifice also became the three upper varṇas (vss. 11–12): his mouth the brahmins, masters of knowledge and speech; his arms the rulers, the possessors of power; and his thighs the freemen or clansmen, who are the productive support of society. These three classes form parts of the sacrifice because they can participate in the sacrifice. The śūdras or "servants" are not part of the sacrifice but rather emerge from the feet of the Man, a symbol of their low social status and their exclusion from the sacrifice. Finally, the elements of the cosmos and gods themselves come forth from the sacrifice (vss. 13–14). This primeval sacrifice thus establishes the "first foundations" for the performance of the sacrifice or even for the ritual, social, divine, and visible worlds more generally (vs. 16ab), and it creates access to heaven (16cd).

The identity of the Sādhyas (in vss. 7 and 16) is not clear. Their name means "those to be brought to success," and they appear to be ancient sacrificers whose proper ritual performance has "perfected" them and who have attained god-like status or the status of gods.

1. The Man has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet.
   Having covered the earth on all sides, he extended ten fingers' breadth beyond.
2. The Man alone is this whole (world): what has come into being and what is to be.
   Moreover, he is master of immortality when he climbs beyond (this world) through food.
3. So much is his greatness, but the Man is more than this:
   a quarter of him is all living beings; three quarters are the immortal in heaven.
4. With his three quarters the Man went upward, but a quarter of him came to be here again.
   From there he strode out in different directions toward what eats and what does not eat.
5. From him the Virāj was born; from the Virāj the Man.
   Upon his birth, he reached beyond the earth from behind and also from in front.
6. When, with the Man as the offering, the gods extended the sacrifice, spring was its melted butter, summer its firewood, autumn its offering.
7. On the ritual grass they consecrated that sacrifice, the Man, born at the beginning.
   With him the gods sacrificed, (also) the Sādhyas and those who were seers.
8. From that sacrifice, when it was offered in full, the clotted-butter mixture was collected.
   It [=the sacrifice] was made into the animals: those of the air (and both) those that belong to the wilderness and those that belong to the village.
9. From this sacrifice, when it was offered in full, the verses and chants were born.
   Meters were born from it. The sacrificial formula—from it that was born.
10. From it horses were born and whatever animals have teeth in both jaws.
    Cows were born from it. From it were born goats and sheep.
11. When they apportioned the Man, into how many parts did they arrange him?
    What was his mouth? What his two arms? What are said to be his two thighs, his two feet?

12. The brahmin was his mouth. The ruler was made his two arms.
As to his thighs—that is what the freeman was. From his two feet the servant was born.
13. The moon was born from his mind. From his eye the sun was born.
From his mouth Indra and Agni, from his breath Vāyu was born.
14. From his navel was the midspace. From his head the heaven developed.
From his two feet the earth, and the directions from his ear. Thus they arranged the worlds.
15. Its enclosing sticks were seven; the kindling sticks were made three times seven,
when the gods, extending the sacrifice, bound the Man as the (sacrificial) animal.
16. With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice for themselves: these were the first foundations.
These, its greatness, accompanied (it) to heaven's vault, where the ancient Sādhyas and the gods are.

X.91 (917) Agni

Aruṇa Vaitahavya
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

This hymn is reminiscent of X.89 in style: a well-crafted, self-consciously rhetorical praise of the god utilizing standard tropes and traditional images. The poet of this hymn is especially fond of etymological figures (especially in the first few verses) and chaining between verses (note, e.g., vss. 8d/9a, 10/11).

The hymn covers many familiar themes, contrasting the physical fire (e.g., vss. 5–7) with the deified fire and his ritual roles, but it is the latter aspect of Agni that is dominant.

1. Awakening, he is kindled by the wakeful ones, the household master in the house, becoming refreshed in the footprint of refreshment,
the Hotar of every oblation, worthy to be chosen, far-ranging, far-radiant, a good comrade to one who acts as comrade.
2. He, with beauty lovely to see, a guest in every house—in every (piece of) wood he is set like (a bird) of swooping pursuit in the woods.
Belonging to the people, he does not overlook any people. Belonging to the clan, he dwells among the clans—each and every clan.
3. Very skillful through your skills, through your will you are strong-willed.
O Agni, you are the all-knowing poet through your poetic craft.
As good one, you alone hold sway over goods, which both Heaven and Earth foster.

4. Foresightful, o Agni, you have settled down seasonably to your ghee-rich womb, in the footprint of refreshment.
Your arrivals show brightly like those of the dawns, your reins spotless like the rays of the sun.
5. Your beauties, brilliant like the lightning flashes of a rain-bearing (cloud), show brightly like the beacons of the dawns,
when, set loose toward the plants and woods, you encompass them yourself as food in your mouth.
6. The plants conceived him as their embryo at the proper season; the waters as his mothers begot this Agni.
Both the woody (plants) and the sprouts (become) pregnant and give birth to him who is just the same everywhere.
7. When whipped up by the wind, aroused, you spread yourself out, constantly worrying the dry food at will,
your unaging troops [=flames] take up their places separately like charioteers, as you go burning, Agni.
8. Creator of wisdom, furtherer of the rite, Agni, the Hotar, best encompassing thought,
just him at the small oblation, just the same for the great one—just him they choose—no other than you.
9. Just you do they choose here—the ritual adepts devoted to you—as Hotar at the rites, o Agni,
when seeking the gods they provide pleasurable offerings for you—the men with their oblations, with their twisted ritual grass.
10. Yours, Agni, is the office of Hotar; yours that of Potar in its turn; yours that of Neṣṭar; you are the Agnidh [=fire-kindler] of the one who follows truth.
Yours is the office of Praśāstar; you act as Adhvaryu; you are both the Brahman-priest and the Houselord in our home.
11. The mortal who for you, the immortal, o Agni, will perform pious work with the kindling stick or by the preparation of the oblation,
for him you become the Hotar; his mission do you undertake. You speak on his behalf; you perform sacrifice, you act as Adhvaryu for him.
12. These here—the thoughts, speeches, verses, songs, and good praises from us—have come together for him,
for Jātavedas the good one—goods-seeking (praises) in which he will take pleasure as their strengthener, though they are (already) strong.
13. I would proclaim this good praise here, a newer one, to him, the age-old, who is eager for it: let him hear us.
May it come very close, to touch his heart, like an eager wife, richly dressed, to her husband.

14. (For him) into whom horses, bulls, oxen, mated cows, rams, once released, are poured out [=offered],
for the *kīlāla*-drinker who has soma on his back, for the ritual adept I generate with my heart a pleasing thought—for Agni.
15. An oblation has been poured into your mouth, Agni, like ghee into a ladle, like soma into a cup.
Place in us prize-gaining wealth, rich in heroes, celebrated, glorious, lofty.

X.92 (918) All Gods

Śāryāta Mānava
15 verses: jagatī

A generally disorganized and often puzzling hymn, it nonetheless begins with three well-turned verses to Agni, using some of the same lexicon and imagery as the preceding Agni hymn. This initial similarity may account for the placement of the hymn in the maṇḍala. Two Agni verses also close the hymn (14–15) in a ritual context.

What lies between seems to lack structure and logical progression. Some verses contain an odd assortment of divinities and semi-divinities (e.g., vss. 4–5, 11–13); Rudra and/or the Maruts recur in several verses (5–6, 9). Fragments of familiar myths appear without further development—for example, Indra's interference with the horses of the Sun in verse 8—and other verses contain apparent references to other stories of which we know nothing (e.g., vs. 10). In short, despite some pleasing passages, the hymn mostly yields frustration.

1. (I invoke) for you the charioteer of the sacrifice, the clanlord of clans, the Hotar, the guest by night, rich in radiance.
Blazing in the dry (sticks), flickering in the golden (plants), the bullish beacon, worthy of the sacrifice, has reached heaven.
2. This one here, who drinks directly, have both (sides [=gods and men]) made their own: Agni the supporter, the furtherer of the rite.
The dawns kiss the youthfully exuberant one like the night, the one set in front, the descendant of himself, of ruddy (fire).
3. Yes indeed! we discriminate between his counsels and those of a niggard.
Twigs have been bepoured for his eating.
When the fearsome ones [=Aṅgirases] reached immortality, just after that did they pay tribute to the divine race.
4. For heaven, the broad expanse, is the trajectory of truth. (There there is) Reverence and great Devotion, the very admirable.
(There) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa perceive with like mind, and Bhaga and Savitar—(all) possessing refined skill.

5. The rivers go forth with the journeying Rudra; across great Devotion they have run—
those with which the earth-circling one [=Parjanya?], going around the broad expanse, constantly rumbling in his belly, besprinkles everything.
6. Busy are the Rudras, the Maruts belonging to all communities, the falcons of heaven, nestlings of the lord.
Through them Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman make their observations, and Indra hastening with the hastening gods.
7. Having labored to exhaustion, they have obtained their benefit in Indra, in the sight of the sun, and in the masculine nature of the bull—
the bards [=Aṅgirases?] who fashioned as his due the mace, his yokemate, at the sessions [=sacrifices] of men.
8. He [=Indra] brought to a halt even the golden (horses) of the Sun, his very own. Anyone feels fear before Indra the stronger,
before the snorting from the belly of the fearsome bull. Day after day the victorious one thunders, unrepellable.
9. With reverence show forth your praise today to Rudra the skillful, who rules over heroes,
(and to those [=Maruts]) with whom he, the well-disposed, very helpful, self-glorious one, keeps company—with those of heaven who travel their ways, the avid ones.
10. Because they disseminated their fame to their progeny—Bṛhaspati, the bull, and those akin to Soma—
the first Atharvan (priest) distributed it through sacrifices. The gods and the Bhṛgus perceive with like mind through their skills.
11. For Heaven and Earth of abundant seed, Narāśaṃsa, the four-square, Yama, Aditi,
god Tvaṣṭar, treasure-giver, the masters of the Ṛbhus, Rodasī [/the two World-Halves], the Maruts, Viṣṇu are deserving.
12. And of us, the fire-priests, our sage poet [=Agni?] (is) widely (perceptible). Let Ahi Budhnya listen to his call;
let Sun and Moon, the heaven dwellers wandering separately. O you two Nahuṣī [=Manu and Nahus?], through visionary thought and ritual labor take cognizance of this one.
13. Let Pūṣan, belonging to the All Gods, let the Child of the Waters, let Vāyu help us forward to seek our movable (goods=livestock).
Chant to Vāta, the lifebreath, all the more. O Aśvins, easy to invoke, hear this on your journey.
14. Him who presides over these fearless clans, the self-glorious one, we hymn with hymns;
Aditi without assault, along with all the Wives (of the Gods), and the youthful lord of the night (do I?), the manly minded, (hymn).

15. Here crackles the foremost Aṅgiras [=Agni] from birth. The pressing stones, aloft, look upon the ceremony,
(those stones) by which the wide-gazing (soma) became widely extended. The (livestock) pen is well-grounded, the axe in the wooden (tree).

X.93 (919) All Gods

Tānva Pārtha

15 verses: prastārapaṅkti, except anuṣṭubh 2–3, 13, paṅkti? 9, nyaṅkusāriṇī 11, purastādbṛhatī 15 [per Anukramaṇī]

Even more so than the previous hymn, X.92, this hymn to the All Gods poses more challenges to the interpreter than it yields rewards. This opinion seems to be almost universally shared (see, e.g., Geldner, Renou, Gonda [1975: 212]), and it is generally agreed that some of the problems may be due to faulty transmission.

The poem is composed in a variety of meters, with verses of mixed twelve/eleven- and eight-syllable pādas, at least in principle—though often these pādas do not conform, by syllable count, caesura, or cadence quantities, to their models. (On the meter see Oldenberg 1888: 101, 117.) The syntax of the hymn is also quite sketchy, with many verbs missing and with nominal forms often apparently merely juxtaposed rather than being linked by normal case relations, and the identity of the referents in many verses is obscure.

The reasons for the choice of the gods honored and their sequence are also not clear. The hymn begins with a verse to Heaven and Earth, who recur in verse 10. Verses 2–3 treat the gods in general, while verse 4 begins to name names, starting with the Ādityas. The next three verses (5–7) form a relatively well-organized unit, with a focus on the Aśvins and a shared opening (*utá naḥ* "and us"). The end of verse 7 provides a transition to verse 8, with the Ṛbhus and their master, Indra, who also appears in verses 9 and 11. The poet summarizes his poem in verse 12 (with more pride than we would perhaps allow him). Verses 13–15 constitute a dānastuti, mentioning a number of patrons. Note that the name that the Anukramaṇī supplies for the poet has simply been extracted from the name(s) of one or more patrons in verse 15.

1. Become greatly wide, o Heaven and Earth; the two world-halves are always like exuberant young women for us.
With these (gods?) protect us from one more powerful; with them protect us when (he is) swollen with strength.
2. At every sacrifice that mortal honors the gods
who, of longest fame, seeks to entice them here with benevolent thoughts.

3. O you who have control over them all, the shield of the gods is mighty, for they all possess all might; all are worthy of the sacrifice at the sacrifices.
4. The kings of immortality are gladdening: Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, and the Earth-Encircler [=Wind?]—
and what about Rudra praised of men?—the Maruts, Pūṣan, Bhaga.
5. And for us by night (and by day), o you two of bullish goods [=Aśvins], the Sun and Moon are our joint guides toward the seat of the waters,
when in company with them Ahi Budhnya [/the Serpent of the Deep] has been set in the depths.
6. And for us let the two gods, the Aśvins, lords of beauty, let Mitra and Varuṇa make broad space through their domains.
He hastens toward great riches, across difficulties as if across wastelands.
7. And to us let the Aśvins, though Rudras, be merciful—and all the gods, the Lord of the Chariot, Bhaga,
Ṛbhu, Vāja, o Masters of the Ṛbhus, the Earth-Encircler, o you who afford all possessions.
8. Craftsmanly is the Master of the Ṛbhus [=Indra]; craftsmanly is the exhilarating drink of the one who does honor—(let) your two prizewinning fallow bays (come) hither, as you speed—
of the one whose melody is also difficult to surpass, (whose) separate sacrifice is like (a sacrifice) stemming from Manu.
9. Make for us immoderation (of wealth), god Savitar. I will praise (you?) in company with our patrons.
Along with his draft-horses, Indra keeps hitching up (wealth) for these (patrons) of ours and keeps hold of "the wheel of the domains" like a rein.
10. On them, o Heaven and Earth, confer great fame reaching to all domains, and on the heroes among us,
(and confer) strengthening nourishment for the winning of the prize, strengthening nourishment for victory through wealth.
11. O Indra, inclined toward us, (come?) to this laudation, wherever it may be, for our dominance, mighty one.
Always protect (us) for our dominance. Let our acquisition fatten, o good one.
12. This praise of mine for the superior men, the praise whose course is dazzling as if by its stretching to the sun, they have strengthened,
as a carpenter strengthens a horse-"conciliator" [=piece of horse tack?], (so) it cannot be budged.
13. They whose (priestly gift) comes rolling, their (priestly gift) is golden, yoked with wealth—
(it is) like manly forces when facing the other side, like one whose ends have been accomplished [?] at will.

14. I proclaim this in front of Duḥśīma, Pṛthavāna, Vena, in front of Rāma the lordly, in front of the patrons
who, having yoked five hundred, (sent) them along the path, destined for us, (so that) their (priestly gift) has become widely famed.
15. In addition here and now seven and seventy
at once did Tānva assign (to us), at once did Pārthya assign, at once did Māyava assign.

X.94 (920) Pressing Stones

The snake Arbuda Kādraveya
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5, 7, 14

This second hymn to the pressing stones (for the relations among the three pressing-stone hymns, see the introduction to X.76) is a playful and imaginative praise of these implements for extracting the soma juice from the plant. The stones are animatized throughout—as human workers, as hungry bulls, as birds, as antelopes, as horses. But there is special emphasis on them as speakers. The first four verses begin with "speaking" verbs (and often continue with them), with a variant phrase beginning verse 5, and the last two verses (13–14) echo these verbs. These last two verses treat the unhitching of the stones, their task completed, and the last pāda of verse 14 rather poignantly not only releases them but de-animatizes them: they are now perceived as just stones.

1. Let them speak forth; let us speak forth. Speak a speech to the pressing stones that are speaking,
when, o stones, o mountains, all together you swift ones possessed of soma bear your signal-call, your cry to Indra.
2. They speak as if in hundreds, in thousands. They roar with their golden mouths.
Having toiled at their good work, the good workers, the stones, have achieved the eating of the oblation even before the Hotar.
3. They speak; in this way they found the honey. They growl over the cooked flesh.
Gnawing at the branch of the reddish tree, the gluttonous bulls have bellowed out to it.
4. They speak loftily by reason of the delighting delightful (soma).
Shrieking to Indra, in this way they found the honey.
(Fit) to be clasped by the sisters [=fingers], the clever ones have danced, making the earth heed with their trampling.
5. The eagles have raised their speech up to heaven. In their lair the black antelopes have danced vigorously.

Down they go downward to the rendezvous with the lower one. They have themselves produced much semen from the sun-bright one.
6. Like powerful draft(-horses), they have held fast, yoked together, the bulls bearing the chariot-poles.
When panting and gulping they have bellowed, their snorting sounds like that of chargers.
7. To those who possess ten tracks, ten girthbands, ten yoking cords, ten yokes,
ten reins—sing to the unaging ones pulling ten chariot-poles, ten yoked ones [=fingers?].
8. These swift stones have ten fastening straps. Their delightful harness encircles (them).
They have taken as their share the beestings of the pressed somian stalk of the first plant.
9. The soma-eaters kiss the two fallow bays of Indra. Milking the plant, they sit on the cow(hide).
Having drunk the somian honey milked by them, Indra grows strong, spreads out, plays the bull.
10. Your plant is a bull. You will certainly not suffer harm. You are always possessed of nourishment, (well-)fed.
You are pleasing to him whose ceremony you have enjoyed because of your grandeur, as if because of a richly endowed (daughter, given to him in marriage?), o pressing stones.
11. Drilled or undrilled, you stones are unwearying, unslackened, immortal,
unailing, unaging, unbudgeable, very stout, unthirsty, unthirsting.
12. Firmly fixed are your fathers [=mountains] in every age. Desirous of repose, they do not hitch themselves up from their seat.
Undecaying, companions of the golden (soma), (like) golden trees, they have made Heaven and Earth listen by their bellowing.
13. Just so do the stones speak at their unhitching, *or on their course they speak with their tramplings—the stones as they drink (the soma) directly.
Like grain-producers [=farmers/millstones] strewing seed, strewing their "seed" [=semen] they engorge the soma. They do not diminish him though they gnaw at him.
14. When (the soma) was pressed in the ceremony they raised their voice, like playful (boys) jostling their mother.
Unhitch (the stones) that have pressed it and release the inspired thought of the (priest) who has pressed it. Let them roll away, being (now) perceived as (just) stones [/the stones no longer being held in harness].

X.95 (921) Purūravas and Urvaśī

Dialogue between Purūravas Aiḍa and Urvaśī
18 verses: triṣṭubh

This very famous and much-discussed hymn contains the dialogue between the Apsaras Urvaśī and her discarded mortal husband Purūravas. He accosts her on her journey (presumably back to her fellow Apsarases) and demands that they discuss what went wrong with their marriage (vs. 1). He reminisces about her beauty (vs. 3) and her good wifely ways (vs. 4), while she impatiently dismisses him (vs. 2) and provides her own view of her service as wife (vs. 5). The next verses (6–11) primarily concern the crowd of Apsarases who attended Urvaśī when she gave birth to her and Purūravas's son Āyu. Purūravas evinces some jealousy about (as well as some physical attraction to) these females with whom he competed for Urvaśī's attention and to whom she is returning, while Urvaśī here implies that Purūravas should have his mind on more manly matters than love, such as military protection (esp. vss. 7 and 11; see also the ironic vocative "hero" in 5).

Urvaśī attempts to dismiss Purūravas again (vs. 11). He tries another tack to keep her from leaving: how can she separate him from his loving son (vs. 12)—to which she briskly replies that she'll send him the kid, chillingly referred to in the neuter, back to him (vs. 12). The second half of this verse forms a ring with the second half of verse 2, her first speech: she seems thus to be trying to bring the conversation to a close. But Purūravas raises the stakes: with masterfully expressed self-pity he then suggests that he may disappear or die (and won't she be sorry then…?, vs. 14). Urvaśī wearily talks him out of it (vss. 15–16). He tries one more time (vs. 17), using a grander and more solemn linguistic register. The hymn ends with a somewhat enigmatic summary verse (18) containing the gods' address to Purūravas at the end of this affair. Because Purūravas's connection with the immortal Apsaras (note that Apsarases are called "immortal" in vs. 9) was severed and his son was returned to him, the mortal, he is bound to death, and his offspring will relate to the gods as mortals do, by sacrifice. But he will nonetheless later receive a joyous afterlife in heaven. (It is noteworthy that this is the only occurrence of the word *svargá* "heaven" in the Ṛgveda.)

One of the many extraordinary features of this brief masterpiece is the way it replicates the shifting emotional logic, the abrupt changes of tone and subject, and the twisting of the other's words characteristic of a genuine marital quarrel of whatever era and culture, while presenting us with pictures of great beauty, however difficult the language is to interpret in many places. It is also uncompromising in its depiction of a resolute and hard-hearted female, unmoved by the abject pleas and emotional blackmail of her former lover who is still in love with her, anxious to return to her carefree life with her fellow Apsarases, and happy enough to abandon her child in order to get free.

There are several well-known later versions of this story. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI.5.1 embeds many of the Ṛgvedic verses into a prose narrative, which seems to have misunderstood, deliberately or not, several of the crucial verses. And one of the three surviving plays of the great Classical Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa is a much expanded treatment of the pair's love affair. No subsequent version can tolerate the radical portrait of the emotionally detached Urvaśī found in the Ṛgveda; in all cases the separation of the former lovers is not the result of the female's decision, but of a curse. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, a creative misreading of verse 3—involving bleating pet lambs tied to a bedpost, a thunderstorm, and the provision that Urvaśī never see Purūravas naked—results in Urvaśī's disappearance. In Kālidāsa's play the curse has no connection to anything in the Ṛgvedic hymn: a love-besotted Urvaśī brings it on herself by uttering her beloved Purūravas's name at the wrong time. (In both versions the portrayal of Purūravas does retain his own passion for Urvaśī; in fact in Kālidāsa's play he goes mad after she disappears and asks birds, beasts, and trees, in the late Middle Indo-Aryan language variety Apabhraṃśa, about her whereabouts.) It is an interesting commentary on the changing fortunes of female figures that the hard edges of the Ṛgvedic Urvaśī must be softened to make her acceptable in later literature.

1. [Purūravas:] "Woe, wife! Thoughtfully—stand still, fearsome woman!—
   let us two now exchange words.
   These thoughts, if unuttered, will not bring us joy even on a distant day."
2. [Urvaśī:] "What shall I do with this speech of yours? I have marched
   forth, like the foremost of the dawns.
   Purūravas—go off home again. I am as hard to attain as the wind."
3. [Purūravas:] "…as an arrow from the quiver of beauty, a shot winning
   cows, as a charge winning hundreds.
   Under the will of no man, she will keep flashing forth like (lightning);
   like a lamb its bleating, so are her tumultuous (tempests) displayed."
4. [Purūravas:] "She was (always) imparting energy, a good thing, to her
   father-in-law—every dawn, whenever he wants it, from the house
   opposite.
   She attained a home in which she took pleasure; day and night she was
   pierced by my rod."
5. [Urvaśī:] "Three times a day you used to pierced me with your rod, and
   you 'filled it up' [=had an erection] for me, who did not seek it.
   Purūravas, I followed your will. You were then the king of my body, you
   'hero.'"
6. [Purūravas:] "The beautifully glowing rank (of Apsarases), friends in good
   favor, interlaced like a pond's-eye [=lotus], (always) on the move—
   these flowed like reddish salves; like milk-cows they bellowed for beauty."
7. [Urvaśī:] "When this one [=the son of Purūravas and Urvaśī] was being
   born, the women were in attendance, and the rivers, gurgling to
   themselves, strengthened him,
   (just) as for great battle, for the smiting of Dasyus, the gods made you
   strong, Purūravas."

8. [Purūravas:] "When I, a human, drew near to those nonhuman women when they were taking off their robes,
like a shy antelope they shied away from me, like horses that have brushed against a chariot."
9. [Urvaśī:] "When a mortal, going to caress immortal women, mingles (with their bodies) amid their cries, as if by his intentions,
like ducks they preen their own bodies, like horses playful and constantly nipping."
10. [Purūravas:] "She who in her flight kept flashing like lightning, the watery (maiden) bringing me the delights of love—
(a son) belonging to men, nobly born, was born from the water—
Urvaśī extends Āyu his lifetime long."
11. [Urvaśī:] "You were born just so: to afford protection. (But instead) you have exerted this force on me, Purūravas.
I, knowing, instructed you on that very day. You did not listen to me. Why will you speak without profit?"
12. [Purūravas:] "When will my begotten son seek his father? (When) will he let a tear roll like a wheel, on recognizing (him [=his father])?
Who keeps apart a married couple joined in mind as long as the fire will (still) blaze in (the house of) the parents-in-law?"
13. [Urvaśī:] "I'll give him an answer when he lets his tear roll. Like a wheel he screeches for kindly care.
I will send it [=child] to you, that thing of yours that's with us. Go away home. For you will not attain me, you fool."
14. [Purūravas:] "And if the gods' pet should fly away today, never to return, to go to the most distant distance...
Then he might lie in the lap of Dissolution. Then again the ravening wolves might eat him..."
15. [Urvaśī:] "O Purūravas, don't die. Don't fly away. Don't let the unkindly wolves eat you.
There exist no partnerships with women: they have hyenas' hearts."
16. [Urvaśī:] "When in different form I roamed among mortals and spent the nights (with you?) for four autumns,
once a day I ate a drop of ghee. Just from that I continue to be sated now."
17. [Purūravas:] "She who fills the midspace, who is the measurer of the dusky realm, Urvaśī—I, the best (of men?), seek to bring her under my sway.
Since the granting of a good deed will stand you in good stead, turn back: my heart is scorched."
18. Thus these gods here say to you, Aiḍa [=Purūravas]: "As it (turned out) this way, you have a bond to death.
Your progeny will sacrifice to the gods with an oblation, but you will also rejoice in heaven."

X.96 (922) Praise of Indra's Horses

Baru Āṅgirasa or Sarvahari Aindra
13 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12–13

Like III.44 the design of this hymn is an extended pun between the words *hári*/*hárita* "gold-colored, tawny" (used regularly for soma and for Indra's "fallow bay" horses) and the verb *hárya* "enjoy" and its derivatives. As in III.44 we have rendered the former as "golden," even in reference to the horses, and the latter as "gladden(ing)," as a close English equivalent of this play on words. A subsidiary pun is persistent through the hymn, involving the golden mace and the golden soma (see, e.g., vs. 3); the referent of the adjective is often not expressed, and the audience is free to fill in either or both. The context often allows either, and since they are identical in gender, there is no grammatical obstacle. Similar ambiguity is found between the golden horses and the golden soma (e.g., vs. 10). In other verbal twists the "wrong" qualifier is used, but the underlying pun evokes the "right" one. Thus in verse 4 the "gladdening" mace is compared to the sun, which should really be "golden."

1. I proclaim your two golden (horses) at the great rite of distribution.
I prevail over the gladdening, exhilarating drink for you who are eager for it,
the drink which, like ghee, drips with golden (drops). Let the songs enter you, whose form is golden.
2. For those who have cried out together toward the golden womb are the ones spurring on the two golden (horses) toward it as toward a heavenly seat.
(To him) whom they fill with golden (soma drops) as milk-cows do with golden (drops of ghee)—to Indra chant a fortifying (hymn), accompanied by golden (soma).
3. This is his gold-colored mace, which is made of metal. The golden (mace/soma) is eager; the golden one is in his two fists.
Brilliant and fair-lipped is he who has as the missile of his battle fury the golden (mace/soma). The golden forms are fixed fast in Indra.
4. Like the beacon in heaven [=sun], the gladdening (mace) has been set in place; the (golden) mace will take wide compass like a golden (racehorse) with its charge.
The golden-lipped (mace), which is made of metal, thrust against the serpent. The bearer of the golden (mace) became thousand-flamed.
5. It was just you who were gladdened when you were praised by the ancient sacrificers, o golden-haired Indra.
You are glad (now): yours is every bounty, complete and gladdening, worthy to be hymned, o golden-born one.

6. These two gladdening golden (horses) convey in his chariot the mace-bearing, exhilarating, praiseworthy Indra in his exhilaration.
For him who is glad for the many soma-pressings, for Indra, the golden soma juices have run.
7. Sufficient for his desire, the golden ones have run; the golden ones spur on the surpassing pair of golden (horses) for the steadfast one.
Who speeds as he pleases with his golden steeds, he has attained his desire that provides the golden (soma).
8. Golden-bearded, golden-haired, made of metal, who, drinking the golden (soma), has grown strong on the drink of surpassing,
who with his golden steeds, rich in prizewinning mares, will deliver his two golden (horses) beyond all difficult ways,
9. Whose golden lips, which are like two (golden) spoons, have flown apart, as he sets his two lips to twitching for the prize,
when, after the cup is done, he will groom his two golden (horses), upon drinking of the exhilarating drink, the gladdening stalk.
10. And the seat of the gladdening (soma) is in both dwelling places. The possessor of golden (horses/soma) has roared toward the prize like a racehorse.
Because even the great (Earth), the Holy Place, was gladdened by your might, you took on lofty vigor—yourself also gladdening.
11. You, being gladdened, (filled) the two world-halves with your greatness. You now become glad at every new dear thought.
O lord, reveal forth to the golden sun the gladdening dwelling place of the cow.
12. Let the advance teams of the peoples convey you here in your chariot—you, the golden-lipped, in your gladness, o Indra,
so that you will drink of the honey that is offered, finding gladness in the ten-armed sacrifice at the joint revelry.
13. You have drunk of the earlier soma-pressings, o possessor of the golden (horses/soma), and this pressing here is yours alone.
Find exhilaration in the honeyed soma, Indra. Rain it utterly into your belly, o bull.

X.97 (923) Plants

Bhiṣaj Ātharvaṇa
23 verses: anuṣṭubh

Atharvan in character, this hymn is addressed to the healing plants, which are praised for their lineage and their powers and implored to provide remedies for particular sick men. The 1st-person speaker is presumably not merely the poet but also the healer, and he calls on the plants to lend their power to his verbal healing spells (see esp. vs. 14).

1. The plants that were born earlier, the third generation before the gods—
I shall now call to mind the one hundred and seven forms of those brown (plants).
2. One hundred are the forms of you all, o mother, and a thousand are your shoots.
So then, o you all who possess a hundred strategies, make this (man) here to be free of disease for me.
3. Rejoice, o plants, since you are blooming and fruitful.
Like victorious mares, the sprouts deliver.
4. O mothers, called "plants," o goddesses, I implore you in this way:
"Might I gain a horse, a cow, a garment, (in gaining [=curing]) your very self, o man."
5. Your seat is in the *aśvattha*-tree; your nest is made in the *parṇa*-tree:
you will surely get a share in the cow when you will gain [=cure] the man.
6. When the plants have come together, like kings at an assembly,
that inspired poet is said to be a healer who smites the demons and banishes affliction.
7. The "horse possessor," the "soma-possessor," the "strengthener," the "overpowering one"—
all these plants have I acquired for this (man) here not to be harmed.
8. The unbridled forces of the plants rise up like cows from the cowpen as they seek to gain the stake and your very self, o man.
9. Your mother is the "Restorer" by name, and you all are "Expellers."
You are streambeds [=stalks] with wings [=leaves]. You expel what causes affliction.
10. They have stepped over the fences like a thief over a barricade.
The plants have driven forth whatever malady of the body there is.
11. When I take these plants in my hand, invigorating them,
the very self of the sickness perishes, as if before being captured alive.
12. Him whose every limb, every joint you slither over,
from him thrust aside the sickness, like a mighty (man) lying in the middle.
13. Fly forth, o sickness, together with the *cāṣa*-bird and the *kikidīvi*-bird.
Perish together with the swoop of the wind and together with the blizzard [?].
14. Let one of you help the other. Give help to one another.
All of you, being in agreement—help this speech of mine.
15. Those that bear fruit and those without fruit, those without flowers and those that have flowers—
impelled by Bṛhaspati, let them release us from distress.

16. Let them release me from (the shackle) of a curse, and also from (the shackle) of Varuṇa,
and from the shackle of Yama—from every offense against the gods.
17. Flying down from heaven, the plants spoke:
"The man whom we will reach (while he is still) alive, that man will not suffer harm."
18. The many plants, having a hundred appearances, whose king is Soma—
of those you are the highest—sufficient for our desire, weal for our heart.
19. You plants whose king is Soma, spread wide along the earth—
impelled by Bṛhaspati, jointly give heroic power to this one here [=medicinal plant].
20. Let your digger not suffer harm, nor him for whom I dig you.
Let our two-footed and four-footed all be free of affliction.
21. Both those who hear this nearby and those who have gone far into the distance —
all of you, having coming together, o sprouts—jointly give heroic power to this one here [=medicinal plant].
22. The plants come to an agreement with King Soma:
"For whom the brahmin acts, him, o king, will we deliver."
23. You are the highest, o plant. The trees are your subordinates.
Let him be subordinate to us, whoever assails us.

X.98 (924) Devāpi's Plea for Rain

Devāpi Ārṣṭiṣeṇa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn contains a prayer for rain, set in the context of a similar (successful) prayer in legendary time. The protagonists of this legend are Devāpi, a priest and poet, in fact the Hotar and Purohita (at this late stage in the Ṛgveda this latter priestly role seems to have become established) for Śaṃtanu, presumably a king, and the god Bṛhaspati. The first four verses consist of a dialogue between Devāpi (vss. 1, 3), Bṛhaspati (vs. 2), and, in our view, Śaṃtanu (vs. 4, though some scholars consider this verse the speech of Bṛhaspati). Devāpi requests Bṛhaspati to act as intermediary for him, asking the appropriate god to send rain. Devāpi must have made this request standing by the ritual fire, for in verse 2 Bṛhaspati identifies Agni as their go-between and then provides Devāpi with a speech, presumably a charm that can provoke rain. Devāpi acknowledges this gift in verse 3, and in verse 4 Śaṃtanu asks Devāpi to perform sacrifice.

The next three verses (5–7) summarize the successful outcome of this story. With verse 8 the hymn turns to present time and to the god Agni, who carried the original plea from Devāpi to Bṛhaspati. The present poet again asks Agni to send rain (vss. 8, 10, 12), while mentioning somewhat wistfully the many sacrificial gifts we might receive (vs. 9)—gifts that he then offers to Agni (vs. 10) to present in turn to Indra (vs. 11).

1. [Devāpi:] "Bṛhaspati, confront (the appropriate) divinity for me,
(saying): 'whether you are Mitra or Varuṇa, or Pūṣan,
or whether you are the companion of the Maruts [=Indra], or are with the Ādityas or the Vasus, make Parjanya rain for Śaṃtanu.'"
2. [Bṛhaspati:] "The quick messenger god [=Agni], taking cognizance,
went from you, Devāpi, to me.
Turn here, face to face in front of me: I place heaven-bright speech in your mouth."
3. [Devāpi:] "Place heaven-bright speech in us, in our mouth, o Bṛhaspati,
speech that is invigorating and free from affliction,
by which we two will win rain for Śaṃtanu. The honeyed drop of heaven has entered (me)."
4. [Śaṃtanu?:] "Let the honeyed drops enter us. O Indra, give a thousand (cows) with a chariot in addition.
Sit down to the office of Hotar; sacrifice according to the ritual sequence. O Devāpi, honor the gods with an oblation."
5. The seer Devāpi, the son of Ṛṣṭiṣena, sitting down to the office of Hotar, cognizant of the favor of the gods —
he sent the heavenly rainwaters gushing from the higher to the lower sea.
6. In this higher sea the waters stood still, confined by the gods.
They ran, sent gushing by the son of Ṛṣṭiṣena, impelled by Devāpi in currycomb tracks [=rivulets].
7. When Devāpi, installed as Purohita for Śaṃtanu and chosen for the office of Hotar, reflected with longing,
Bṛhaspati, bestowing, gave him speech audible to the gods, winning rain.
8. O Agni, you whom Devāpi kindled—the son of Ṛṣṭiṣena, belonging to Manu's line, himself blazing—
cheered on by all the gods, rouse forth Parjanya who brings rain.
9. To you the ancient seers came with their songs; to you (now) all (come) at the ceremonies, o much invoked one.
For us there are thousands (of cows), with a chariot in addition. Drive here to our sacrifice, o you of the chestnut horses.
10. These nine and ninety thousand, along with a chariot in addition, are offered in you, Agni.
With them strengthen your many bodies, o champion. Aroused, grant us rain from heaven.

11. These ninety thousand, o Agni—present them to the bull Indra as his share.
Knowing the paths leading to the gods in proper order, set Aulāna among the gods in heaven.
12. Agni, thrust away scorners, away difficult depths; ward off affliction, off demonic forces.
From this sea of lofty heaven for us send an abundance of waters gushing upon us.

X.99 (925) Indra

Vamra Vaikhānasa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

In this very obscure hymn the exact contents and referents in each verse are almost impossible to interpret and identify, and much of the translation is therefore provisional. On the other hand, the structure and progression of the hymn are surprisingly clear. Although it is an Indra hymn, at least according to the Anukramaṇī, the name Indra does not appear until the very last verse, the poet's summary verse (12b), and then only once. In fact the hymn contains almost no divine names: Rudras (in the plural, perhaps of the Maruts, perhaps not, in vs. 5) and Varuṇa in a simile in verse 10. The first four verses contain no names at all, and though subsequent verses do contain a number of them, most of these are names of enemies or of mortals aided by the gods. As in many other difficult hymns the avoidance of names seems to be meant to keep the referents deliberately unclear, and the contorted phraseology and allusions to otherwise unknown stories, especially in the earlier parts of the hymn, seem designed to keep the audience guessing and in some cases to deliberately mislead them. As the hymn goes on, Indra's identity becomes clearer, as in verse 9 with the Śuṣṇa/Kutsa saga. (On this obscure verse see also Jamison 2009d [2013].)

The grammar mirrors this gradual progress toward the recognition and perhaps the epiphany of Indra. The hymn begins in verse 1 with questions about the identity of the referents, an indication of maximal uncertainty. The next seven and a half verses (2–9ab) display an advance toward certainty: almost every half-verse begins with the pronoun *sá* "he," suggesting that the poet has a definite referent in mind, however vague it may be to the audience. But *sá* is a discourse pronoun: it does not indicate where the referent is located. Starting with the second half of verse 9 the next four half-verses begin with a form of the deictic pronoun *ayám* "this one here," strongly pointing to a referent in the immediate vicinity of the speaker. These *ayám* forms may signal the actual presence, the epiphany, of Indra, arrived at the sacrificial ground.

1. Which bright bellower of ours do you, taking cognizance, send speeding along the broad earth for strengthening?
What is his share of strength at the break of dawn? He fashioned the mace that overcomes obstacles; he made it swell.

2. For he pursues the melody with his flashing, with his lightning. He has taken his seat upon the broad womb through his lordliness.
Together with the nest-mates and not without his brother, he is the one who prevails over the magic tricks of the seventh.
3. He is the one who drives to the prize, though going with a (horse?) whose "off" foot is lame [?]. At the winning of the sun, intending to win he laid siege to it,
when, unassailable, smashing the phallus-worshipers, with his form he prevailed over the property of (the place?) with a hundred doors.
4. He pours out the youthful streams, while as charger running for the cows that are at stake,
when those in harness, though lacking feet and chariots, having wooden cups as horses, move toward the ghee, the water.
5. Together with the Rudras, the Craftsman, whose wish is unpraiseworthy but who keeps disrepute at a distance, has come here, abandoning his house.
This reminds me of the ant couple who were away from their lair, and (someone), approaching and stealing their food, made (them) weep.
6. Just he, the household lord, subdued the mightily roaring Dāsa, with his six eyes and three heads.
Grown strong through his might, Trita smashed the boar with his metal-tipped poetic inspiration.
7. Rising up for Manu, he will propel his arrow at the deceitful Arśasāna.
He, most manly, well-born from Nahus and from us, split the fortresses at the smashing of the Dasyus, as was his due.
8. He, like a storm-cloud streaming water upon the pasture-land, finds a way to a peaceful dwelling for us.
When he reverently approaches the (soma-)drop with his limbs, the falcon with claws of metal smashes the Dasyus.
9. Along with his (men) swelling with strength, (he smashed) the arrogant ones. He handed Śuṣṇa over to Kutsa for the Karpan [?].
This one here led the poet who was being praised, who won his cloak and was the winner among superior men.
10. This one here, showing his favor along with his manly (men), wondrous together with the gods, is a master of magic power like Varuṇa.
This one here, the lad who drinks according to the ritual sequence, has been found. He gave his (full) measure against Araru, who was four-footed.
11. Auśija Ṛjiśvan, through his praises to him, burst the cowpen of Pipru together with the bull.
When the one worthy of the sacrifice possesses the pressed soma and the song will shine, (then), being implored, with his form he (will) prevail over the fortresses.

12. In just this way, o lord, for the increase of the great one, Little Ant [/Vamraka, the poet] on his many feet crept up to Indra.
He, being implored, will create well-being for him. Refreshment, nourishment, a good dwelling—all that has he brought.

X.100 (926) All Gods

Duvasyu Vāndana
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12

The most salient characteristic of this hymn is its full-pāda refrain, found in the first eleven of its twelve verses: "we choose wholeness (*sarvátātim*) and innocence (*áditim*)." (Geldner takes the latter as the proper name of the goddess Aditi, from whom we wish to obtain our choice, but not only is there no Ādityan flavor to this hymn, but such a double accusative construction is otherwise unknown with the root √*vṛ* "choose.") At first, with its abstract and somewhat moral cast, this refrain seems unrelated to the content of the verses in which it is placed, but as the hymn proceeds its relevance becomes clearer.

The hymn begins with a celebration of the soma sacrifice and the gods who partake of it, especially Indra (vs. 1) and Vāyu (vs. 2)—the latter marking the ritual as the Morning Pressing—with Savitar, the "Impeller," providing the impetus to the ritual activity (vss. 1, 3). But it slowly becomes clear that the sacrifice is not simply a physical procedure, but is intimately bound up with our emotional well-being (see esp. vss. 5c and 6c). Moreover, in verse 7 it becomes the site of our declaration of innocence before the gods, a sort of "truth formulation," though without all the formal marks of the truth formulation. At this point the refrain becomes an integral part of the verse to which it is attached. Having thus affirmed our blamelessness, we can now ask for the dangers that beset us to be banished (vss. 8–9) and for prosperity and healing to attend us (vs. 10). That the soma sacrifice is the setting for these pleas and that the elements of the ritual facilitate their fulfillment is shown by the prominence of the pressing stones (vss. 8–9) and the mixing milk for the soma (vs. 10).

The happy conclusion of the sacrifice is depicted in verse 11, the last verse with the refrain. The final verse (12), in a different meter, is a somewhat curious mixture. The first half is addressed to an unidentified referent—quite possibly Agni, since the compound "having bright radiance" is ordinarily used of him (though once of Indra and once of Savitar)—with a slightly sinister reminder slipped into the second pāda that there are still enemies around who are thriving. The second half looks like a fragment of a dānastuti, but there are no further clues as to how it might fit into the rest of the hymn.

1. O Indra, stand fast, bounteous one. A thing like you is to be enjoyed.
Praised as the soma-drinker, be here for our strengthening.
Let Savitar, along with the gods, further our (speech, so it is) heard. – We choose wholeness and innocence.

2. Bring forward for the taking a portion at the proper time, for Vāyu who drinks the pure soma, roaring in his quest,
who has attained the drinking of the gleaming milk. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
3. May God Savitar impel vitality here to our sacrificer, the soma-presser who aims straight,
so that we may attend upon the gods guilelessly. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
4. Let Indra be benevolent toward us always; let King Soma stay mindful of our welfare,
in the same way that (pacts) concluded by allies bind (them [=allies]) together. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
5. Indra with his vast power has appropriated the articulation (of the sacrifice?) along with our hymn. O Bṛhaspati, you are the lengthener of lifetime.
The sacrifice is Manu, for it is solicitude, is certainly a father to us. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
6. Indra's is the well-made divine might; Agni is the singer in the house, the wise poet.
And the sacrifice has become our dear intimate at the rite of distribution. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
7. Neither in secret nor in the open have we done to you much ill-doing, angering to the gods, you good ones.
Let no one of us be of the shape of untruth, o gods. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
8. Away and downward may Savitar impel affliction; even more widely let the stones drive it away,
when the honey-pressing pressing-stone is given lofty voice. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
9. Let the pressing stone be upright when the soma-presser is there, o good ones; keep all hatreds away at a distance.
God Savitar is to be reverently invoked as our protector. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
10. O Cows, eat nourishment in the pasture, eat fat, you who are anointed in the cup, at the seat of truth.
Let just this body be medicine for the body. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
11. The singer bringing to fulfillment his conception is a help for each and every one; Indra himself is auspicious solicitude for those who have pressed the soma,
whose heavenly udder is full for pouring. – We choose wholeness and innocence.

12. Bright is your radiance—your superiority brings your conception to fulfillment. (But still) there exist unassailable opponents who bring their own old age to fulfillment.
The one offering friendship seeks to rush in the straightest line to round up the foremost of bovine stock.

X.101 (927) Priests

Budha Saumya
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 4–6, bṛhatī 5, jagatī 9, 12

Addressed to the priests of the soma sacrifice, this charming hymn first likens their ritual activities to various kinds of manual labor, especially farm labor (vss. 3–4). The preparation of soma is then compared to raising water from a well (vss. 5–7) for livestock. The preparation of the soma advances through a series of changing images (vss. 8–10), ending with a surprisingly eroticized pair of verses (11–12).

1. Wake up of one mind, o comrades. Kindle the fire together, you who are many, but from the same nest.
I call down Dadhikrā, Agni, and goddess Dawn, all accompanied by Indra, to aid you.
2. Make things delightful; stretch out your insightful thoughts (on the loom); make a boat that crosses (the water) with its oars.
Set your weapons in order; prepare them right. Lead the sacrifice forth to the east, comrades.
3. Hitch up the plows; stretch the yokes across; in a prepared womb strew the seed here.
If the hearing will be commensurate with our song, the ripe (grain) should come even closer to our sickles.
4. The poets hitch up the plows; they stretch the yokes across separately—the insightful ones in search of favor among the gods.
5. Bring out the buckets; fasten the cords together.
Let us dip out the watery wellspring that is easy to dip, unfailing.
6. The wellspring with its buckets prepared, with good cords, easy to dip, watery, unfailing do I dip.
7. Make the horses happy: you will win the (prize that is) set. Just make your chariot one that brings well-being.
Dip out the wellspring whose buckets are the wooden (soma) cups, its wheel the (pressing) stone, its cask the (sheep's fleece) sheathing, and which gives drink to men.
8. Make a pen (for it), for it gives drink to your men. Stitch (for it) (suits of) armor, ample and broad.
Make (for it) fortresses, metal and unassailable. Let the beaker not leak: make it solid.

9. I turn toward you an insightful thought worthy of the sacrifice, for aid, o gods—a sacrificial goddess worthy of the sacrifice here.
She should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams who has gone to the pastures.
10. Pour out the tawny (soma) into the lap of wood. Fashion (it [=wooden cup]) with axes made of stone.
Embrace (him [=Soma]) with ten girthbands. Yoke the draft-horse to the two chariot-poles.
11. The plodding draft-animal goes between the two chariot-poles like a man with two wives in bed [/into the vulva].
Make the lord of the wood [=tree/soma] stand in the wood. Set (it) down well, without digging out the spring.
12. The penis, the penis—raise it up, men. Rouse (it), stick (it in), to win the prize.
Hurry the son of Niṣṭigrī hither, for help, urgently (hurry) Indra here for soma-drinking.

X.102 (928) The Race of Mudgala and Mudgalānī

Mudgala Bhārmyaśva
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except bṛhatī 1, 3, 12

We two translators have differing interpretations of some of the details and more especially of the ritual application of this hymn. These contrasting views are set out in separate signed discussions in the following introduction.

SWJ

This famous and famously enigmatic hymn presents an intriguing scenario: a chariot race (or a chariot drive) in which a man named Mudgala decisively wins the stakes, with the help of Indra, despite using unorthodox equipment and personnel that seem destined to fail him. His charioteer is his wife Mudgalānī (see vs. 2) and the team drawing the chariot seems to consist of a boisterous and ill-controlled bull yoked with an inert piece of wood (see esp. vss. 9–10). Or so is our best guess; the depiction of the race is oblique and narratively shattered.

Not surprisingly the hymn has provoked much discussion, both about the bare "facts" of the chariot race and about the meaning and purpose of the hymn as a whole. There are two major and interconnected thematic strands motivating the hymn, and these converge in the figure of Mudgalānī and are expressed especially clearly in verse 11, where Mudgalānī recovers her husband, and the pair burgeon with apparent fertility—he "dripping" and she "swelling." She is there also identified as a "(once) avoided wife," in later śrauta ritual a technical term for one of the king's wives, avoided presumably because she failed to produce offspring. So, on

one level the hymn depicts the recovery of fertility and the future production of offspring in Mudgala's line. The hovering presence and aid of the hyper-virile Indra and the emphasis throughout the hymn (see esp. vss. 4–6) on his animal stand-in, the bull pulling the chariot, reinforces this message. Mudgalānī's sexual nature is suggested by our first glimpse of her, with the wind lifting her garment (vs. 2a), and in a particularly startling verse (6) the droppings of the defecating bull keep hitting the woman who is driving him—an image that suggests, as it subverts, sexual contact between the bull and the woman. If this bull stands in for Indra, its yokemate, the wooden club, may represent an impotent Mudgala, and the announcement in verse 10 that the wooden club has now been "made to mount" may signal that Mudgala has, paradoxically, recovered his sexual potency by association with the bull/Indra.

The other thematic strand is a ritual one. In my opinion this hymn takes part in the disguised dialogue in the late Ṛgveda about the ritual innovation, the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife, the ritual patnī, into solemn sacrificial practice. As we have discussed elsewhere, various hymns and sections thereof seem to favor or oppose this innovation, but always in the guise of another discourse. This hymn seems strongly in favor of the introduction of the patnī. It begins with a pun, whose implications are worked out through the rest of the hymn. The first pāda of the hymn introduces Mudgala's chariot, which is *mithūkṛtam*. This word is generally translated "wrongly functioning, falsely made" or the like, and that is surely one of its implications here: the chariot is defective. But it can also mean "making/forming a sexual pair," and this is a very apt description of the new ritual model, with the Sacrificer and his Wife the pair associated with the chariot, a common metaphor for the sacrifice. The rest of hymn can be read as an extended metaphorical treatment of the new ritual model, using the same image of the sacrifice as chariot—with the Wife is charioteer, not yokemate of the Sacrificer as in some other contributions to the discussion (see, e.g., VIII.33.18). The emphasis throughout the hymn on the unorthodox and makeshift nature of the equipment and the surprising outcome in victory signals that the ritual partnership between husband and wife is a new, untried model, which nonetheless brings even more success than the old one. The happy outcome of the hymn, the recovery of her husband and the swelling fertility of Mudgalānī (vs. 11), reminds us of the relentless stress on the Wife's raison d'être in classical śrauta ritual as representative of sexuality and fertility in all their forms (see Jamison 1996a: esp. ch. 3, sect. C–E).

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Alternatively, the hymn may have been composed to accompany a rite of niyoga, in which a surrogate is appointed as a substitute for an impotent or dead husband. Mudgala is the dead or impotent husband, but Mudgalānī has been able win offspring for him by finding a "bull," a potent man, who can impregnate her and secure

the continuation of Mudgala's lineage. In this interpretation, the "wooden club" in verse 9 is a symbol of the potency of the surrogate, rather than the impotence of Mudgala, especially if the "racecourse" in the middle of which it lies is a figure for the body of Mudgalānī. Verse 6 provides a possible clue to the application of this hymn. If the praise of Indra in verse 12 is taken as extra-hymnic, verse 6 is the center of the hymn, the place where the secrets of hymn are often disclosed (or buried even more deeply). It begins *kakárdave vṛṣabhó yuktá āsīt*. Unfortunately, as noted below, the meaning of *kakárdave* is uncertain. (It might be dative "for making kaka" as translated below, but it might also be locative "in the creaking one," referring to the cart driven by Mudgalānī.) But the rest of the pāda is simple and clear: "the bull was yoked." Again in pāda c, the poet repeats that the bull was "yoked." The reason for poet's insistence on this detail may be that *yuktá* "yoked" in this key verse points to the etymologically related "*niyoga*," the hymn's ritual context.

For further discussion of this hymn see Brereton (2002) and Jamison (2011 and forthcoming a).

1. Let Indra advance your chariot boldly (though it be) wrongly made [/forming a sexual pair].
   In this race in pursuit of fame and at the apportioning of spoils, help us, o much-invoked one.
2. The wind kept lifting up her garment when she won a thousand (cattle) and a chariot in addition.
   Mudgalānī was the charioteer in the quest for cattle; as "weapon of Indra," she pulled out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the match.
3. Hold in check the mace of the assailant who seeks to smite (us), o Indra.
   Keep far away the murderous weapon, whether of the Dāsa or of the Ārya, o bounteous one.
4. Growing ever more excited, he drank a lake of water. The "hammer" kept going, crushing hostility.
   The (bull) with balls, seeking fame, striving to win, stretched out his forelegs vigorously.
5. Coming at him, they made him bellow; they made the bull piss in the middle of the race.
   (Yet) through him Mudgala won a thousand plus a hundred well-nourished cattle in the contest.
6. The bull was yoked for making "kaka" [=defecation] [?]. Its long-haired charioteer dodged and dodged,
   but the droppings of the frenzied bull, yoked and running with the cart, kept hitting Mudgalānī.
7. Understanding (the situation), he struck away the outer piece of its wheel, and he yoked up the bull there, working hard.
   Indra helped out the husband of the prized cows: the hump-backed bull sped with his strides.

8. Whip in hand, the man with braided hair achieved good fortune by binding the piece of wood to the strap.
Performing manly deeds for the many folk, keeping an eye on the cows, he [=bull?] assumed his powers.
9. "Look at it here, the yokemate of the bull, the wooden club lying in the middle of the race course,
with which Mudgala won a thousand plus a hundred cattle in the battle-drives."
10. "Troubles begone! Who has ever seen such a thing? The one whom they yoke, they (now) make him mount (the chariot/his wife?).
They bring him neither grass nor water. The higher (end) of the chariot-pole draws (the chariot), directing (it) ever forward."
11. She has accomplished the recovery of her husband, like a (once) avoided wife: she swelling, he dripping, as if (working) with a poor (water) wheel.
Might we also be victorious with a charioteer who is quicker than quick. Let the winnings bring good luck and possessions.
12. Indra, you are (the eye) of the entire moving world, the eye of the eye, when, a bull yourself, you strive to win the race with a bull, driving (him) with a steer as (his) yokemate.

X.103 (929) Indra (1–3, 5–11), Bṛhaspati (4), Āpva (12), Indra or the Maruts (13)

Apratiratha Aindra
13 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 13

A martial hymn, dense with expressions of overwhelming power and victorious might. The early parts of the hymn present Indra as the unconquerable conqueror. Stylistically this part is marked by repetition and especially by the chaining of key lexical items from the end of one verse to the beginning of the next. Curiously, X.84, a hymn to "Battle Fury," also shows this type of concatenation, and so it may be that stitching verses together in this way creates a sort of magically impenetrable verbal armor.

In the course of the hymn the focus shifts from exclusive concentration on Indra to *our* warriors and the inspiration Indra's model should provide for them to perform heroically in battle. Our men are first addressed already in the second half of verse 2, but it is in verse 6 and then in verses 10–13 that the application of Indra's behavior to that of our men and the transference of his skills and courage to them really come to the fore.

1. Swift, honing himself as a fearsome bull (does its horns), smiting again and again, the agitator of the settled domains
who makes them cry out together, the unwinking lone hero—he conquered a hundred armies all at once—Indra.
2. With him, who makes (them) cry out together, who is unwinking, conquering, combat-creating, difficult to shake, bold—
with Indra now conquer, now overwhelm the combatants, o men—with the bull with arrows in his hand.
3. He together with those with arrows in their hands, he together with those having quivers, willful Indra, with his throng, who is the one to send the combatants surging together,
conquering those sent surging together, drinking the soma, arrogant in his arms, the archer of mighty bow having his (arrows) aimed.
4. Bṛhaspati, fly around with your chariot, as demon-smasher repelling those without alliance.
Shattering the armies, pulverizing them, conquering in combat, be the helper of *our* chariots.
5. Recognizable by his power, stalwart, a hero at the fore, a prizewinner with overwhelming strength, overwhelming and mighty,
a hero on attack, a warrior on attack, born of overwhelming strength—o Indra, mount the conquering chariot as the finder of cattle.
6. The splitter of the cowpen, the finder of cows, the one with the mace in his arms, winning the course, pulverizing with his might—
show your heroism in imitation of that one, you kinfolks; pull yourselves together in imitation of him, you comrades.
7. Plunging toward the cowpens with overwhelming strength, the hero without mercy, Indra of the hundredfold battle-fury,
difficult to shake, overwhelming in battle, impossible to combat—let him further *our* armies in the combats.
8. Let Indra (go in front) as their leader, let Bṛhaspati, the priestly gift, the sacrifice, the soma go in front;
let the Maruts go to the forefront of the shattering, conquering armies of the gods.
9. Of Indra the bull and of Varuṇa the king—mighty their troop of Ādityas and of Maruts—
of the great-minded, earth-shaking, conquering gods the battle-cry has arisen.
10. Make our weapons bristle up, o bounteous one—up the minds of my own little warriors,
up, o Vṛtra-smasher, the competitive spirits of the competitors. Up let the battle-cries of the conquering chariots go.
11. *Ours* is Indra when the battle flags clash. *Our* arrows—let them conquer. *Our* heroes—let them have the upper (hand). Help *us* amid the calls (to you), o gods.

12. Confusing the perception of those yonder, seize their limbs, o Lady Panic, and go away.
Go forth against them; with flames burn them in their hearts. Let those without alliance keep company with blind darkness.
13. Go forth and conquer, o men. Let Indra offer you shelter.
Let your arms be mighty so that you will be unassailable.

X.104 (930) Indra

Aṣṭaka Vaiśvāmitra
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn is identified as a descendant of Viśvāmitra, and the hymn ends (vs. 11) with the Viśvāmitra refrain found in most of the Indra hymns of the IIIrd Maṇḍala (III.31.22, etc.). Like X.89, another Indra hymn of the Xth Maṇḍala ascribed to a Vaiśvāmitra and ending with the same refrain, this hymn seems like a self-consciously old-fashioned composition, falling squarely into the genre of "journey" hymn, in which Indra is invited to come with his horses to the soma-pressing. That praise poetry is at least equally important as soma at the sacrifice is made abundantly clear throughout the hymn. Toward the end (starting with vs. 8), the hymn turns to the topic of the Vṛtra myth and, especially, Indra's freeing of the waters after his defeat of Vṛtra.

1. The soma has been pressed for you, o much-invoked one. With your pair of fallow bays, drive swiftly to the sacrifice.
The songs, having poets for heroes, making their way, have run to you, Indra. Drink of the pressed soma.
2. You of the fallow bays, drink here of (the soma) rinsed in the waters, pressed by our men—fill your belly!—
which the stones have trickled for you, Indra. With these (soma drinks) increase your exhilaration, o you whose conveyance is hymns.
3. I rouse forth the drink of pressed soma, mighty and true, for the bull—for you to drive forth, o possessor of the fallow bays.
Indra, make yourself exhilarated here with our nourishing streams, while being ably hymned with all our insightful thoughts.
4. By your help, able one, and your heroic might, the fire-priests who know the truth, acquiring the vigor
that brings offspring, have taken their place in the house of Manu, o Indra, singing and sharing in the exhilaration.
5. Through your guidance—you of good praise, of good favor, and of much radiance, o master of the fallow bays—the peoples,
your praisers, are acquiring your most bounteous help to bring them across—and through your liberal gifts, Indra.

6. O you of the fallow bays, drive near to our sacred formulations with your pair of fallow bays to drink of the pressed soma.
Indra, the sacrifice has reached you, patiently waiting. You are the pious sign of the rite.
7. The bounteous one having a thousand prizes, vanquishing hostility, delighting in the pressing, (receiving) well-twisted (hymns)—
unopposable Indra do the songs attend upon. In the singer's desire to do homage they express wonder at Indra.
8. Seven are the divine waters, very delightful and unharmable, by which you, Indra, the stronghold-splitter, crossed the boundary river,
the ninety and nine streaming streams. You found the way for the gods and for Manu.
9. You freed the great waters from their curse, and you, the god, alone kept watch over them.
Indra, those (waters) that you made at the overcoming of Vṛtra, with these you should thrive in body throughout a whole lifetime.
10. The resolve proper to a hero—that's Indra, who (receives) good praises; (the good praise) as well as the (soma-)stream summon the much-invoked one.
He shook Vṛtra to pieces; he made wide space; as the able one, as superiority (itself), he vanquished the battle arrays.
11. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

X.105 (931) Indra

Durmitra Kautsa or Sumitra Kautsa
11 verses: predominately uṣṇih (per Anukramaṇī)

The meter of this hymn is, to say the least, highly irregular and variable from verse to verse. Despite the Anukramaṇī analysis it is better analyzed as consisting mainly of verses with a seven-syllable middle pāda, and one or more triṣṭubh pādas before and/or after. See Oldenberg (1888: 158–59).

The hymn also poses many problems of interpretation, and the metrical and verbal anomalies have led many commentators to consider the text corrupt—a judgment by which we are tempted. Even if not corrupt, the text is stylistically abrupt, contorted, and compressed, and many puzzles remain unsolved. The hymn also appears to be jocular in places, making sly fun of Indra and cutting him down to size. This is especially clear in the section devoted to Indra's pair of fallow bay horses (vss. 2–5), where the poet implies that without his horses Indra is nothing

much: it's the horses that give him prestige (see esp. vss. 3–4). The sections concerning his weapon (vss. 6–7) and the sacrifice (vss. 8–10) accord Indra more of his usual glory, but still in oblique phraseology.

1. When, o good one, for (you) who yearn for praise, will your beard descend to the water,
   to the (soma) long pressed for (you) whose friendship is sought [/befriended by the wind]?
2. You who pursue your two fallow bays, well yoked but possessing separate commandments, the steeds *with slender penises,
   the two with manes like two lines—you, the houselord—
3. Apart from which two Indra stays stock-still, like an exhausted mortal overcome by fear.
   (But) when he, the forceful, has yoked them for beauty,
4. Together with them Indra will ever be famed—(though) he's (just) their sidecar and providing (them) service—
   together with the two roarers with their separate commandments Indra (will be famed) as a champion.
5. He who has mounted on the maned pair, as if on the two of broad expanse [=Heaven and Earth?], to prosper,
   the fair-lipped one wins (the soma?) with his pair of lips.
6. He of lofty might has struck up the praise song with the lofty ones. The champion fashioned it with his swelling strength,
   like an artisan [/Ṛbhu] in accord with his intentions, (like?) Mātariśvan.
7. Who made his own mace, to smash the Dasyu easily—he, golden-colored, golden,
   with unbroken jaw, is like the infallible airy realm [?].
8. Grind down the crooked things for us. By our verse might we vanquish those without verses.
   Not without sacred formulations is our individual sacrifice, while you are taking pleasure in it.
9. When the threefold one has become upright for you upon the yokepoles of the sacrifice, in its place,
   then, jointly with these two [=horses?], (make?/board?) a boat that has its own glory.
10. For splendor is your dappled pourer, for splendor your spotless ladle, with which you pour up into your own vessel.
11. Whether a hundred are counter(part) to you, lordly one, Sumitra has praised (you) in just this way, Durmitra has praised (you) in just this way,
    in that you helped Kutsa's son in the smashing of Dasyus, in that you furthered Kutsa's kid in the smashing of Dasyus.

X.106 (932) Aśvins

Bhūtāṃśa Kāśyapa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

There is no question that this is the most frustrating hymn in the Ṛgveda. Structured like another Aśvin hymn, II.39, it presents a blizzard of similes—generally one each pāda, four to a verse—with the two gods compared to all manner of animals, people, body parts, and cosmic features. Unfortunately the style goes far beyond the recondite to the utterly incomprehensible, with impossible hapaxes of unusual morphological structure, seemingly in part driven by phonological play. These words may be archaic or dialectal or slang or belong to specific technical fields or borrowed/adapted from a substrate language or playfully generated from morphological templates—or, as has been suggested, the middle section may be written in a kind of code, with phoneme-by-phoneme substitution. Or all of the above, and more.

In any case, following the eminently sensible lead of Geldner (implicitly endorsed by Oldenberg and Renou), we have simply left the middle verses (5–8) untranslated, while attempting to wring sense from the outer frame. Although many ingenious attempts have been made to interpret the baffling lexical items in this hymn and more could have been made, such attempts remain just that—exercises in ingenuity. It seems more honest, as well as truer to the spirit of the hymn, evidently designed to challenge the decoding skills of the most proficient and experienced hearers, to acknowledge its impenetrable center. From this several observations emerge. First, this appears to be the ultimate omphalos hymn. In most omphalos hymns the center holds the mystery, but the mystery is expressed in words whose purport can be puzzled out. Here that mysterious center deliberately defies analysis by being expressed in words that are tantalizingly close to familiar word-types, but whose code cannot be cracked—and rendered all the more frustrating by the presence of real, analyzable words in the midst of the semi-gibberish. The hymn takes the notion of an omphalos and carries it as far as it can go, suggesting that many mysteries will remain beyond our apprehension, or at least our apprehension by verbal means.

The outer verses (1–4, 9–11) reveal further traces of poetic structure, especially when compared with II.39 mentioned above. The parallels between the two hymns seem to be deliberate and self-consciously generated. They begin almost identically: the first pāda of II.39.1 (minus the opening simile) reads *...tád íd árthaṃ jarethe* "you two awaken to just this aim," in sense and verbal expression almost identical to our *ubhā́ u nūnáṃ tád íd arthayethe* "Now you both have just this as your aim," with the "awaken" postponed until pāda c. The final verses of both hymns (II.39.8, X.106.11) are summary verses, announcing the hymn just completed (interestingly called a mantra in this hymn) and urging the Aśvins to drive to the hymn and the sacrifice. In between are a varying number of verses, constructed as webs of similes, most of which are more complex and clever than the general run of Ṛgvedic similes. It thus seems that this hymn-type provides a

template, which could generate within it an unlimited number of inventive comparisons. It is not hard to imagine this process as a competitive one, with poets vying to use the most outré words and over-strained and mannered images, all contained and controlled by the overall structure of the template. In our hymn we return to discipline from the unruly center via several verses of reasonably comprehensible similes (vss. 9–10) to reach, with some relief, the safe shore of verse 11. (It may not be entirely fanciful to suggest that the first simile in the return verses [9a] promises "firm standing in the depths"—something the audience has surely been seeking, in vain.)

1. Now you both have just this as your aim: you stretch out insights like workers their cloths.
   It has awakened you two to drive toward a common goal. You haul provisions here as you do the day-bright (days).
2. Like plow-oxen [?] you are fixed in [/to] the *pharvara*; like brawny lead-horses [?] you follow instructions.
   Because you are like messengers who acquire glory among the peoples, do not stay away like buffalo from a waterhole.
3. Joined together like the wings of a bird, conspicuous like livestock, come here to our sacrificial formula.
   Shining like the fire of a man who seeks the gods, like two encircling the earth you perform sacrifice in many places.
4. (I call upon you,) who are like friends to us, as sons do their parents—like powerful (Heaven and Earth) with their light, like kings for triumph,
   like energetic (herdsmen) for prosperity, like the two labia for enjoyment. Like obedient (servants), come here to my call.
5. *váṃsageva pūṣaryà śimbátā mitréva ṛtấ śatárā śấtapantā*
   vấjevoccấ váyasā gharmyeṣṭhấ méṣeveṣấ saparyà púrīṣā
6. *sṛṇyèva jarbhárī turpharītū naitośéva turpharī parpharīkā*
   udanyajéva jémanā maderū́ tấ me jarấyv ajáram marấyu
7. *pajréva cárcaraṃ jấram marấyu, kṣádmevấrtheṣu tartarītha ugrā*
   ṛbhū́ nấpat kharamajrấ kharájrur, vāyúr ná parpharat kṣayad rayīṇấm
8. *gharméva mádhu jaṭháre sanérū, bhágevitā turpharī phárivấram*
   pataréva cacarấ candránirṇiṅ, mánaṛṅgā mananyà ná jágmī
9. Like the two lofty (world-halves) you will find firm standing in the depths, as his feet do for a man crossing a ford,
   for like two ears you will remember our instructions. Like Share and Portion, apportion to us a conspicuous reward.
10. Like *āraṅgara* you produce (the milk) in the cow whose opening is below, as bees produce honey,
    like plowmen sweating out their sweat. Like earth, (a cow) that feeds on good pasture, you are accompanied by nourishment.

11. Might we bring our praise song to fulfillment and might we win the prize of victory. Sharing the same chariot, drive here—you two—right up to our mantra
    and to the cooked honey within the cows, as if to glory. Bhūtāṃśa has fulfilled the desire of the Aśvins.

X.107 (933) Dakṣiṇā (Priestly Gift) or Its Givers

Divya Āṅgirasa or Dakṣiṇā Prājāpatyā
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 4

These extravagant praises of the dakṣiṇā ("priestly gift"), which is given by the sacrificer to the various priests who officiate at his sacrifice, are clearly in the poet's interests, as he stands to receive a portion of the sacrificer's largesse. The hymn seldom strays from its point—that a dakṣiṇā, once given, brings untold benefits to the giver, both material and spiritual, far exceeding the value of the original gift. It is a persuasive, if somewhat monotone, piece of work.

1. Their great generosity has been revealed. All life has been freed from darkness;
   the great light, given by the forefathers, has come. The wide path for the priestly gift has become visible.
2. High above in heaven have they taken their stand—those providing the priestly gift. Those who give horses, they (come) together with the sun;
   those giving gold receive a share in immortality; those giving garments extend their own lifetime, o Soma.
3. The priestly gift is the divine bestowal, a sacrificial offering to the gods; it is not for the stingy, for they do not bestow.
   But many men who present priestly gifts bestow through fear of disgrace.
4. Those with manly sight see (it as) the wind with its hundred streams (of rain), (as) the chant that finds the sun; they see (it as) the oblation.
   Those who bestow and present at the (sacrificial) assembly, they milk the priestly gift with its seven mothers.
5. The provider of the priestly gift goes as the first invited; the provider of the priestly gift goes to the front as the leader of the horde.
   I think just he is the lord of peoples—the one who first sought out the priestly gift.
6. They say that just he is the seer, he the creator of sacred formulations, the leader of the sacrifice, the singer of chants, the reciter of solemn words.
   He knows the three bodies of the blazing one—he who first found success with the priestly gift.

7. The priestly gift gives the horse; the priestly gift the cow; the priestly gift the lustrous and what is golden.
   The priestly gift wins the food that is our very lifebreath. He who understands makes the priestly gift his armor.
8. The benefactors have not died, nor have they gone to a failed end; the benefactors are not harmed, nor do they falter.
   What is this whole world and the sun, all this does the priestly gift give to them.
9. The benefactors at first won the sweet-smelling womb; the benefactors won a bride who is richly dressed.
   The benefactors won the right to the inner drinking of liquor. The benefactors won (against those) who come forward uninvited.
10. For the benefactor they groom the swift horse; for the benefactor the maiden sits waiting, making herself beautiful.
    This dwelling of the benefactor is like a lotus-pond, adorned and shimmering like the palaces of the gods.
11. The steadily conveying horses convey the benefactor. Rolling easily, the chariot of the priestly gift rolls on.
    O gods, help the benefactor in the raids. The benefactor will win against his rivals at the encounters (with them).

X.108 (934) Saramā and the Paṇis

Saramā and Paṇis
11 verses: triṣṭubh

In the interpretation of this well-known and delightful dialogue hymn we follow the compelling study by Hanns-Peter Schmidt in his *Bṛhaspati und Indra* (1968: 185–89). This dialogue takes place in the midst of a narrative whose outlines are clear, even if its details are not. The Paṇis have entrapped cattle in a cave. Indra and the ancient Vedic seers wish to release the cattle. Therefore, Indra sends his dog Saramā to track down the Paṇis and to demand the release of the cattle. She crosses the Rasā, the river at the border of the world that separates heaven and earth, and finds the Paṇis. The Paṇis refuse to surrender the cattle, however, and at the end Indra and the seers—the Aṅgirases and Navagvas—themselves come to the place where the Paṇis have hidden the cattle. They break open the cave through the power of the hymns they compose and chant. Because Indra's weapon in this story is not the vajra, the mace with which he destroys Vṛtra, but the truth embodied in the hymns that Indra and the seers recite, Indra is here called Bṛhaspati, "Lord of the Sacred Formulation."

The story also tells of the coming of the dawns, since the power of Indra's and the seer's words lies in the secret truth that the cattle are the dawns. Note that at the end, the poet uses the power of this truth for his own ends: through the truth of his hymn, he should acquire or recover cattle.

Despite the seriousness of the theme, it is hard to believe that the audience did not relish the depiction of a talking dog, especially one as saucy and forthright as the faithful Saramā, who resists the offered blandishments of the Paṇis, to remain loyal to her master Indra.

1. [Paṇi:] Seeking what has Saramā arrived here, for far is the road, swallowing up (the traveler) in the distance?
   What is your mission to us? What was the final turn (bringing you here)? How did you cross the waters of the Rasā?
2. [Saramā:] Sent as the messenger of Indra I travel, seeking your great hidden treasuries, Paṇis.
   With a fear of leaping across—that helped us!—in that way I crossed the waters of the Rasā.
3. [Paṇi:] Of what sort is Indra, Saramā? What is his appearance?—he as whose messenger you raced here from afar?
   If he will come here, we will make an alliance with him, and then he will become the cowherd of our cattle.
4. [Saramā:] I know him not as one who can be deceived. He will deceive!—he as whose messenger I raced here from afar.
   Deep flowing rivers do not hide him. Smashed by Indra, Paṇis, you will lie still.
5. [Paṇi:] These cattle that you sought, Saramā, as you were flying around the ends of heaven, fortunate one—
   who will release them to you without a fight? And our battle weapons are sharp!
6. [Saramā:] Your words are no weapons, Paṇis! Let your evil bodies be impervious to arrows
   or let the path to you be impossible to follow—either way, Bṛhaspati will have no mercy on you!
7. [Paṇi:] This treasury with its foundation of rock is overflowing with cows, horses, and goods, Saramā.
   The Paṇis, who are good herdsmen, guard it. In vain have you come on an empty track.
8. [Saramā:] The seers, sharpened by soma, will come here to this place: Ayāsya [=Indra], the Aṅgirases, and the Navagvas.
   They will divide up this pen of cattle. Then will the Paṇis just vomit this speech (of theirs)!
9. [Paṇi:] Even though you have come in this way, Saramā, compelled by divine power,
   I shall make you my sister. Do not go back. We will give away a portion of the cows to you, fortunate one.

10. [Saramā:] I know no brotherhood and no sisterhood. Indra and the terrifying Aṅgirases, they know (these things).
They seemed to me desirous of cattle when I came. Go away from here, Paṇis, a very long way!
11. [Narrator:] Go far from here, Paṇis, a very long way! Exchanging places with the truth, let the cows come up
which Bṛhaspati found hidden—he and the soma, the pressing stones, and the inspired seers.

X.109 (935) All Gods

Juhū Brahmajayā or Ūrdhvanābhan Brāhma
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 6–7

This short hymn has provoked much discussion, but, in our opinion, it has not been well served by its commentators. The topic of the hymn is the "Brahmin's wife," mentioned explicitly in verses 2–7, and in particular the "giving back" of the Brahmin's wife. The currently prevailing opinion about the hymn (see especially Geldner and Doniger O'Flaherty) is that it represents an early version of the story in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (IV.6.5) in which King Soma abducts the wife of Bṛhaspati, the guru of the gods, and ultimately is forced to return her. Needless to say, the chronological difference—the several millennia intervening between the Ṛgveda and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa—should make this connection a disfavored one unless no other possible interpretations can be found. And it is also the case that the Ṛgvedic hymn lacks almost all the salient features of the purāṇic story, including the abduction.

We instead believe that the hymn relates to the much-debated issue in the late Ṛgveda about the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife into ritual performance (see, e.g., nearby X.102), and that the poet both recognizes the perils of this new ritual practice and reassures his audience that all will be well. The hymn has an omphalos structure: the first and last verses (1 and 7) concern the "offense" (*kílbiṣa*) implicitly done to the Brahmin (husband of the woman in question) by separating him from his wife and placing her in the ritual arena, where she interacts with the gods and acts as conduit of the fearsome forces unleashed by the sacrifice. Her contact with the gods is potentially adulterous, and, given the power of the gods, there is also the danger that they will not want to release her at the end of the ritual. But these possible dangers do not arise: the inner ring of the hymn (vss. 2, 6) emphatically states that the gods have given her back without rancor, and the *kílbiṣa* is expiated in the final verse (7).

The middle verses (3–5) concern the wife's activities on the ritual ground and their importance. It is she who "places what is difficult to place in the highest distant heaven" (vs. 4), in our view a reference to her role in mediating between the earthly and divine realms especially in the animal sacrifice: she figuratively deposits the oblation in heaven by touching and ritually preparing the sacrificed animal. The most difficult verse is 5, which also contains the only Ṛgvedic occurrence of the word *brahmacārín* (already in the Atharvaveda a word for "Vedic student" and later a standard way of referring to a man practicing chastity). Although the verse remains enigmatic, it is possible that it suggests that a single ritual performer (reciter of formulations) is necessary but not sufficient, and it is for this reason that the Wife has been introduced into ritual practice.

The hymn is also saturated with wedding vocabulary ("grasp the hand," "lead," etc.). This domestic ritual, in which man and wife participate jointly, provides a reassuring model for the wife's foray into the more solemn and serious realm of śrauta ritual.

For more detailed discussion, see Jamison (forthcoming b).

1. These were the first to speak at the offense against the Brahmin: boundless Ocean, Mātariśvan,
powerful ascetic Fervor, staunch in rage but joy itself, the divine Waters, first born by their truth.
2. Soma the king first gave back the Brahmin's wife, without being angry.
Varuṇa as ally was her escort; Agni, the Hotar, having grasped (her) by the hand, led (her) here.
3. The deposit is to be grasped only by her hand, just when they have announced: "Here is the Brahmin's wife."
She does not stand for sending a messenger. In this way is the kingship of the ruler protected.
4. The ancient gods and the seven seers, who settled down to ascetic fervor, conversed about her:
"Fearsome is the wife of the Brahmin, when she is led close [/initiated]; she places what is difficult to place in the highest distant heaven."
5. The one who practices formulations keeps constantly laboring at his labors. He becomes (just) one limb of the gods.
With him Bṛhaspati discovered the (Brahmin's) wife, who was led by Soma, as (you found) the sacrificial ladle [/tongue (=Agni)], o gods.
6. The gods, verily, have given (her) back, and the sons of Manu (have given her) back;
the kings [=Ādityas], making it come true, have given back the Brahmin's wife.
7. Having given back the Brahmin's wife, having made expiation of offense along with the gods,
having shared in the nourishment of the earth, they reverently approach wide-ranging (space).

X.110 (936) Āprī

Jamadagni Bhārgava or Rāma Jāmadagnya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

One of the ten Āprī hymns in the Ṛgveda, structured litanies to be recited at the animal sacrifice, each verse with its own key word. This hymn follows the standard Āprī pattern of course, but is notable for the amount of internal recycling of phraseology (see the echoes between vss. 2 and 10; 3 and 9; 4, 7, and 10; 4 and 8). As usual, the key words are italicized.

1. *Kindled* today in the dwelling of Manu, as god you sacrifice to the gods, o Jātavedas.
   And as observant one convey them hither, you possessing Mitra's might. You are the messenger, the prescient poet.
2. *Tanūnapāt*, anointing with honey the paths traveling to truth, sweeten them, you of lovely tongue.
   And bringing to fulfillment our mental concepts and our sacrifice through (your) hymnic visions, make our ceremony (be) among the gods.
3. Being libated, as one *to be solemnly invoked* and to be extolled, travel here in concert with the good ones, Agni.
   You are the Hotar of the gods, youthful one. Sacrifice to them when prompted, as superior sacrificer.
4. Facing east along the forward direction of the earth, the *ritual grass* is twisted at the dawning of this (dawn), in the vanguard of the days.
   It spreads out further, more widely, as a comfortable place for the gods, for Aditi.
5. Let the expansive ones gape open widely, beautifying themselves like wives for their husbands—
   you *Divine Doors*, lofty, setting all in motion, become easy for the gods to approach.
6. Richly fertile, worthy of the sacrifice—let *Dawn and Night* sit down here close together in the womb—
   heavenly maidens, lofty, with lovely ornaments, assuming brilliantly adorned splendor.
7. The two *Divine Hotars*, foremost, eloquent, measuring out the sacrifice of Manu to sacrifice it—
   the two bards at the rites, spurring on, directing the east-facing light along the forward direction (of the earth) [/at their direction].
8. Let *Bharatī* come straightaway to our sacrifice, and *Iḍā*, making (us) perceive here [=instructing us] as she did Manu.
   Let the three goddesses, (those two and) *Sarasvatī*, the good workers, sit here on this ritual grass, a comfortable place.

9. He who (adorned) Heaven and Earth, these two begetters, and who adorned all the creatures with their forms,
   to him today, to god *Tvaṣṭar*, o Hotar, superior sacrificer, perform sacrifice here when prompted, as the knowing one.
10. Send the oblations downward to the fold of the gods at the proper season, having anointed them by yourself.
    Let the *Lord of the Forest*, the Butcher, and god Agni sweeten the oblation with honey and ghee.
11. Just born, he measured out the sacrifice at once. Agni became the leader of the gods.
    At the direction of this Hotar, at his word of truth, let the gods eat the oblation, prepared with the *svāhā-cry*.

X.111 (937) Indra

Aṣṭrādaṃṣṭra Vairūpa
10 verses: triṣṭubh

On the one hand, this hymn simply recites, in straightforward but artful fashion, some of Indra's most celebrated deeds: the Vala myth and the freeing of the cows/dawns (vss. 3–4, possibly 2), the Vṛtra myth and the freeing of the waters (vss. 6, 8–10), with several others glancingly referred to: the propping of heaven and fixation of the earth (vss. 4–5), the smashing of Śuṣṇa (vs. 5). As often, the Vala and Vṛtra myths are sometimes superimposed upon each other, with the cows/dawns of the former conflated with the waters (also female) of the latter. For example, the first pāda of verse 8 seems to continue the travels of the Dawns found in verse 7, but the next pāda makes it clear that the referent is actually the waters of the Vṛtra myth.

On the other hand, and especially in its first few verses, the hymn concerns itself with the interaction between poems and deeds. In verse 1 we poets rouse Indra by making his deeds real, that is, by celebrating them in poetry. In verse 2 the poetry almost seems to precede and stimulate the deed, and verse 3 provides us a picture of Indra whose knowledge of his own deeds seems to derive from hearing about them from poets. If our understanding of verse 4 is correct, the power of poetry to provoke the deeds it celebrates is put into the mythic past, with the Aṅgirases bringing Indra's feats to realization by their hymns. Although this theme disappears in the rest of the hymn, to a poetically acute audience its resonances would probably still be felt in the more conventional treatment of Indra's deeds that follows.

1. Inspired ones, bring forth an inspired thought, in whatever (manifold) ways men's thoughts are.
   We will rouse Indra here with his deeds made real [=as hymns]. For he is a hero known to long for song.

2. Because the hymnic vision flashed out from the seat of truth, the bull, born from a heifer, came together with the cows [=Dawns/hymns].
   He arose with a powerful roar. He entirely encompassed the dusky realms, though they are great.
3. Indra certainly knows of this, from hearing it. For he was the victorious path-maker for the sun,
   and after that, making a wife from a cow [=Dawn], he became the husband of the cow and lord of heaven, immovable, ancient born, unopposable.
4. Indra by his greatness confounded the commandments of the great Flood [=Vala], while being hymned by the Aṅgirases.
   He rooted the dusky realms, though they are many—he who buttressed their buttress by means of (their [=Aṅgirases'] poetic?) realization.
5. Indra is the counterpart of heaven and of earth. He knows all the pressings; he smites Śuṣṇa.
   With the sun he stretched through heaven, though it is great. He also propped it up with a prop, (himself) a better prop (than the prop).
6. Because with your mace as Vṛtra-smiter you laid Vṛtra low, (laid low) the wiles of the godless one swollen with strength,
   you then, bold one, boldly hewed him apart, and so you became arm-strong, bounteous one.
7. When the Dawns kept company with the Sun, their beacons found his glittering gift,
   the heavenly body that appeared here from heaven. No! No one really knows about its going (away) again.
8. Certainly the first of these females have gone into the distance, the waters that flowed at the impulsion of Indra.
   Where is their top, where their bottom? Waters, where is your middle, where now your end?
9. You let loose the rivers that had been swallowed by the serpent. Right after that they roiled forth at speed—
   those seeking release and those that had been released. Then they did not rest, once pointed down.
10. Converging, they went to the river like willing girls. From of old the stronghold-splitter has been acknowledged as their lover.
    To your house have come the earthly goods; to us your many liberalities, Indra.

X.112 (938) Indra

Nabhaḥprebhedana Vairūpa
10 verses: triṣṭubh

A conventional invitation to the soma-drinking, specifically that of the Morning Pressing (see esp. vs. 1). As usual, Indra is urged to travel to our sacrifice with his pair of horses (esp. vss. 2, 4) and to drink the soma, whose serving is described. Also as often, the rival sacrificers who try to tempt Indra to their soma are mentioned and the superior charms of our offerings are touted (vs. 7). The poet also promises a verbal performance celebrating Indra's deeds to accompany the soma offering (vs. 8, also vs. 1), and a very abbreviated précis of the Vala myth is given in the second half of verse 8. The final verse (10) expresses our hopes for Indra's reciprocal generosity.

1. Indra, drink of the pressed soma at your pleasure, for the Early-Morning Pressing, the first drink, is yours.
   Excite yourself, to smite the rivals, o champion. With hymns we shall proclaim your manly deeds.
2. Your chariot that is swifter than thought, Indra, with it drive here for soma-drinking.
   Straightaway let your fallow bays run forth here, with which bullish ones you drive while in exhilaration.
3. Cause your body to be touched by the golden luster of the sun, by its fairest forms.
   When you are invoked by us, your comrades, Indra, in common with us, become exhilarated upon sitting down—
4. You, in the raptures of exhilaration, whose greatness these two great world-halves did not encompass—
   Indra, drive here to this home with your yoked fallow bays, to the dear food with the dear ones.
5. Having drunk of it time after time, Indra, you have done in your rivals, have done inimitable joyous [/martial] (deeds).
   It rouses your plenitude and power; Indra, it is pressed for your exhilaration—the soma!
6. Here is your cup acquired of old, Indra: drink soma with it, you of a hundred resolves.
   The trough is full of exhilarating honey, which all the gods delight in.
7. Because the peoples, with their pleasurable offerings set forth, vie in invoking you in many ways, bullish Indra,
   ours will become the most honeyed ones for you—these pressings here. Delight in them.
8. I will proclaim your previous heroic deeds, proclaim now those first performed.

You, of real battle fervor, made the stone give way; you made the cow easy to find, for the sacred formulation.

9. Sit down, Lord of Throngs, amid the throngs. They call you the most inspired of the wise poets.
Without you, at a distance from you, nothing whatever is accomplished. Chant a great brilliant chant, bounteous one.

10. By watching over us, who are in need, bounteous one, become a comrade to your comrades, o lord of goods.
Do battle, you battle-doer [/make joy, you joy-maker] whose impetuous powers are real. Give us a portion of wealth, even in what is (as yet) unapportioned.

X.113 (939) Indra

Śataprabhedana Vairūpa
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

Indra's great deeds, especially the smiting of Vṛtra (vss. 2–3, 6–8), are once again the subject of this hymn, but the emphasis is on the other gods who contributed to the success of Indra's exploits: Heaven and Earth (vs. 1), Viṣṇu (vs. 2), Mitra and Varuṇa (vs. 5), and especially the Maruts (vss. 2–3, 6). In depicting these various partnerships between Indra and various gods, the poet is establishing the model for a similar relationship between Indra and the present poets and sacrificers. In verse 8 he attributes to "all the gods" the ritual strengthening of Indra by means of praise poetry and soma—an exact parallel to mortals' standard activity on behalf of Indra. In the first half of verse 9 in rather labored language he then addresses his fellow priest-poets, urging them to spell out to Indra their mutual acts of partnership—and providing in the second half of the verse a mythic example of Indra's aid to a mortal in return for hospitality. (Dabhīti's hospitality to Indra and Indra's requital of it by rendering Dabhīti's enemies Dhuni and Cumuri powerless are recounted elsewhere; see, e.g., VI.20.13 and VI.26.6.) Finally in verse 10 he addresses Indra directly, requesting goods from him. Interestingly, it seems that the poet is not asking for these goods for himself, but presumably for his patron, so that the patron in turn will consider the poet a successful wordsmith and reward him appropriately.

1. Heaven and Earth, of one mind with all the gods, assisted his impetuous force.
Creating his own greatness and Indrian power as he went, upon drinking the soma the resolute one increased.

2. Viṣṇu with his strength (assisted) his [=Indra's] greatness, having run to the plant [=soma]. It teems with honey.
Upon smiting Vṛtra with the gods [=Maruts] as fellow travelers, bounteous Indra became worthy to be chosen.

3. When, bearing weapons, you stood with Vṛtra the serpent, for battle, to acquire a laud,
all the Maruts together in person there increased your greatness and Indrian power, strong one.

4. On just being born, he thrust aside the challengers. The hero looked forward to his masculine power, to battle.
He split the stone; he discharged the flowing streams downward. He propped the broad firmament with his skillful work.

5. Thereupon Indra was entirely master of his powers. He thrust apart more widely heaven and earth.
Emboldened [/bristling with excitement], he brought down the metal mace, agreeable to Mitra and to pious Varuṇa.

6. The teeming ones [=Maruts] hastened there for the powers of Indra, for the battle fury of the mettlesome one,
when the strong one split apart Vṛtra with strength—Vṛtra, who was holding the waters but was himself enclosed by darkness.

7. The two who together approached the heroic deeds first to be performed, taking their (battle) places with their great powers—
smoky darkness dusted down on (the one), when he was smashed. Indra by his greatness became lord over the early invocation.

8. All the gods then increased your bullish powers with eloquence accompanied by soma.
He ate the serpent Vṛtra subdued by Indra's blow, as fire does dry food with his jaws.

9. With skillful words accompanied by chants, by reason of your (acts of) comradeship (for him), proclaim the many (acts of) comradeship (for us).
Indra is famed as subjugating Dhuni and Cumuri for Dabhīti by reason of his [=Dabhīti's] mind of trust (in ritual hospitality).

10. You—bring hither many (gifts of) good horses, because of which I shall be considered one who pronounces efficacious enigmas.
Along ways easy to travel may we traverse all difficult passages. Find a ford for us today in wideness.

X.114 (940) All Gods

Sadhri Vairūpa or Gharma Tāpasa
10 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 4

A mystical treatment of the sacrifice, whose mysteries unfortunately remain for the most part unsolved, despite many attempts to identify the referents and relationships of the striking images presented. We will not here add another, most likely doomed, experiment in exegesis, although some possible referents are inserted in brackets below. What is clear is that the elements in the ritual and elements in the

cosmic world are identified with each other (in the style of the bandhus, or mystical identifications, so characteristic of middle Vedic literature), but by way of a mediating esoteric image that can apply to both (at least to "those who know"). This style is especially evident in the first verses of the hymn, while numerology comes more and more to dominate the later verses. Indeed, significant numbers are found from the very beginning (the two heats of vs. 1, the three dissolutions of vs. 2, the four braids and two eagles of vs. 3), but the manipulation of numbers begins in earnest with verses 4–5. These same two verses contrast the poet with his "simple mind," who sees only one entity (vs. 4), with the inspired ones and sage poets (vs. 5), who use their words to make that single entity manifold. Even though many of the details of this enigmatic hymn remain obscure, we can see in this contrast the inherent message of the hymn, that insight and its verbal product, poetry, have the power to give shape and multiplicity to the perceptible world.

1. The two contiguous heat (sources) [=fire and sun/gharma pots/or chant and melody] have pervaded the threefold (world) [/Trivṛt Stoma].
   Mātariśvan has come to enjoyment of the two.
   Seeking to acquire the milk of heaven, they have toiled: the gods know the chant provided with melody.
2. Three (Goddesses of?) Dissolution reverently approach to be pointed out, for the conveyors (of songs?) who hear from afar recognize them.
   The sage poets discern the connection of those (goddesses), (although they dwell) among the distant hidden commandments.
3. The well-ornamented, ghee-faced young woman with four braids [=vedi ("altar")/night sky?] clothes herself in the (ritual) patterns.
   Two bullish eagles have settled down on her, where the gods have acquired their share.
4. The eagle is (really just) one—it has entered the sea; it surveys all this creation.
   With my simple mind I saw it nearby: the mother licks it, and it licks the mother.
5. The inspired ones, the sage poets configure the eagle, though it is just one, in many ways with their words.
   And arranging their meters at the ceremonies, they measure twelve cupfuls of soma.
6. Configuring the four as thirty-six and arranging the meters up to twelve (syllables?),
   having measured out the sacrifice with their inspired thought, the poets make the chariot [=sacrifice] roll forth with ṛc and sāman [/verse and tune].
7. Fourteen are the other powers of this one [=chariot of the sacrifice].
   Seven wise ones [=priests] lead it forth with their speech.
   The opulent ford—who will here proclaim it: the path by which they take the first drink of the soma?

8. Thousandfold are the fifteen ukthas. As great as heaven and earth, so great is that.
   Thousandfold are the thousand powers. As far as the sacred formulation is spread out, so far is speech.
9. Who is the wise one who knows the yoking of the meters? Who has undertaken the holy speech?
   What champion do they call the eighth of the priests? Who indeed has discerned the two fallow bays of Indra?
10. Such ones circle around the end of the earth, (while) they have stayed yoked to the poles of the chariot.
    They [=gods?] distribute the legacy of their labor to them, when Yama becomes established in his secure habitation.

X.115 (941) Agni

Upastuta Vārṣṭihavya
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8, śakvarī 9

This hymn mixes dense and syntactically contorted descriptions of Agni in his natural and ritual aspects with simple declarations of praise of the same god, such that the hymn gives the impression of ending several different times. For example, verse 5 appears to fit the type of a hymn-ending summary verse, calling on the god for aid, but it interrupts the two most complex verses (vss. 4, 6) characterizing Agni as fire, which appear to belong together, however unclear some of the details are. The last three verses of the hymn (7–9), each in a different meter, provide three alternative endings to the hymn, each with overt signals of a final summary verse: verse 7 (in the same meter as the first six verses) *evā́... stave* "thus he is praised"; verse 8... *íti tvā... vandate... vā́k* "so does the speech extol you"; and verse 9 *íti tvā... avocan* "so have they proclaimed you." It is difficult to know what to do with this overabundance of finales.

The descriptive verses (1–4, 6) repay attention, with bold images and multiple puns (e.g., *druṣád* in verse 3, literally "wood-sitting," which is equally applicable to Agni sitting on firewood and to the two associated similes: a bird sitting in a tree and the soma-drop sitting in the wooden cup). As noted above, verses 4 and 6 are especially complex, and they have been variously interpreted. In our view these two verses concern Agni and his flames. In verse 4 he is surrounded by his flames, cleverly compared both to the very active winds and to immovable mountains, and they urge him, here identified, as sometimes elsewhere, as Trita, to mount an expedition. But in verse 6 his own flame concedes to his superior power, even as he seeks food in inhospitable places. But other interpretations are certainly possible.

1. Brilliant is the waxing of the tender babe, though he does not approach his two mothers to suck.
When the udderless one has begotten him, even then has he waxed strong in an instant, undertaking a great mission.
2. He has been established in the house, as "Agni" by name, as the best workman, who wrests together the (pieces of) wood with his gnawing tooth,
with his grinding tongue—he of good ceremony, snorting like a powerful bull in a pasture.
3. Him (I invoke) for you—the god sitting on the wood like a bird in a tree, (like) the drop from the stalk in the wooden cup, snorting, shaving (the ground), undulating,
the conveyor (of the oblations) with his mouth like a draft-horse, abundant with flame, like someone with a great commandment racing along the ways.
4. O unaging one, you whose (flames), as you spread out eager to burn, like winds, (like) immovable (mountains), encircle (you)—
battle-lusty they reach Trita [=Agni] like combatants a consummate warrior, commanding him to seek.
5. Just this Agni, best of the Kaṇvas, comrade of the Kaṇvas, overcomer of the distant stranger and the one close by—
let Agni protect the singers, Agni the patrons; let Agni give us their help.
6. O you of good ancestry, to the best prizewinner, the mightier one, to Jātavedas (does) the (flame?) stirring thirstily con(cede),
to him who acts boldly when he is by choice even in a waterless place, to the greatest one, the one who seeks greedily for food even through a wasteland.
7. Thus is Agni praised along with the mortal patrons as the good one, the spirited (son) of strength by men—
(the patrons) who, well-installed like allies, truth-seeking, like the heavens with their heavenly brilliance surmount the (other) descendants of Manu.
8. "O child of nourishment, mighty one"—so does the bullish speech of Upastuta extol you.
We shall praise you—we who are rich in heroes because of you, establishing a longer lifetime further for ourselves.
9. So have the sons of Vṛṣṭihavya, the Upastutas, seers, proclaimed you, o Agni.
Protect them—both singers and patrons. Saying "*Vaṣaṭ, vaṣaṭ*," (standing) upright they have reached (you); saying "Homage, homage," (standing) upright they have reached (you).

X.116 (942) Indra

Agniyuta (or Agniyūpa) Sthaura
9 verses: triṣṭubh

A fairly straightforward hymn that remains focused on its insistent themes: the invitation to Indra to drink the soma, and the expectations we have of him after he has done so. The first four verses issue the invitation; verses 5–6 ask Indra to use the strength imparted by our soma to defeat our enemies, while the invitation is reiterated in verses 7–8. The hymn proceeds in part by verses paired in theme and language, though verses 3–4 do not show the repetitions and patterned variation in the other three pairs. The final verse (9) summarizes the poet's work while ending with a striking image of the gods as dice, giving (and presumably also withholding) luck.

1. Drink the soma for great Indrian strength. Drink for Vṛtra-smashing, most powerful one.
Drink for wealth and for power while you are being called. Drink of the honey; drench yourself in it, to satiety, o Indra.
2. Drink of this pressed soma, presented along with the (sacrificial) animals, according to your wish, Indra.
Giving well-being, bring yourself to exhilaration in your mind, being inclined our way for our rich good fortune.
3. Let the heavenly soma exhilarate you, Indra; let what is pressed among earth-dwellers exhilarate you.
Let that exhilarate you by which you made wide space; let that exhilarate you by which you melt down your rivals.
4. Doubly lofty, undiminishing, let Indra the bull drive here with his two fallow bays to the stalk that is poured around.
As smasher of the non-luminous, (smashing) the hammer utterly, drench yourself in the honey, pressed on the cow(hide) and brought forth.
5. Blunt the sharpened points, slacken the taut (bowstrings) of those incited by sorcerers.
I give power and strength to you who are mighty. Confronting your rivals, hew them down amid the contesting voices.
6. Loosen the fame of the stranger, Indra, and his might and hostilities like the taut (strings) of a bow.
Turning toward us, having grown strong in your powers, unblunted, make your body strong.
7. This oblation is given to you, bounteous one. Accept it, being without anger, o universal king.
It is pressed for you, bounteous one, and cooked for you: eat and drink of it when it is presented, Indra.

8. Eat just these oblations presented here, Indra. Take your delight in the cooked foods and the soma.
   Bringing the pleasing offerings, we enjoy you. Let the desires of the sacrificer come true.
9. I send forth my eloquent speech to Indra and to Agni; like a boat upon a river I sent it forth with my chants.
   Like dice, the gods whirl around—they who give the stakes to us and get the lucky break.

X.117 (943) Praise of Generosity [*dhanānnadānapraśaṃsā*]

Bhikṣu Āṅgirasa
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–2

Unusual in both subject matter and tone. This hymn has no divine dedicand, but in the Anukramaṇī is termed a "praise of the gift of wealth and food." There is, in fact, almost no mention of divinities or divine powers in the hymn, an almost unique situation in the Ṛgveda; the gods figure only in the first verse and there only obliquely. The emphasis is instead on the mutual relations between humans (comradeship; see, esp., vss. 3–4, 6) and the obligation of the fortunate to provide for those in need. Insofar as the Ṛgveda treats the ethical responsibilities of men, ethical behavior is ordinarily mediated through the gods, especially Mitra and Varuṇa, but here there is no such mediation: the admonitions to behave properly to one's fellow men are direct and no gods are represented as observing and judging human behavior.

The argument for generosity is twofold and is couched not in purely ethical terms, but in terms of self-interest. On the one hand, giving does not do the giver any harm, as his stores do not become depleted. This sentiment is expressed most clearly in verse 1c, but it seems also to underlie the maxim-like verses 7 and 8. Verse 7 seems to be a version of the slightly vulgar English expression "use it or lose it," while verse 8 suggests that sheer quantity isn't the measure of power and effectiveness: the more "feet" an entity has, the less its autonomy and power. On the other hand, not giving does the ungenerous man actual harm. In part, the harm is simply the isolation produced by not acting in a comradely manner. As verse 6 says succinctly, "who eats alone has only evil." But it is also the case that one's fortunes can change (see esp. vs. 5). Those who are rich and well fed today may find themselves in need in the future, and it is best to forge comradely ties by giving now, in case the situations of giver and receiver are reversed.

The tone of the hymn is colloquial and conversational. A number of verses deploy what appear to be old sayings or popular adages, distilled folk wisdom, whose pertinence to the topic at hand is indirect and requires some figuring out. Because of their rarity in the high-register texts of early Vedic, such expressions are very precious, though they can be hard to penetrate.

The Anukramaṇī identifies the poet as Bhikṣu ("beggar") Āṅgirasa, a name presumably suggested after the fact by the subject matter, especially since the word *bhikṣu*, though very common and culturally important in later times, does not occur in the Ṛgveda or indeed any Vedic text that we know of.

1. Truly the gods did not give hunger as the only deadly weapon, and the forms of death do come upon him who is well fed.
   Moreover, the wealth of one who gives does not become exhausted, and the non-giver finds no one to show mercy.
2. Whoever—when a man, weak and broken, has approached desiring nourishment—though he has food,
   hardens his heart, though he always used to be his friend, he also finds no one to show mercy.
3. Just he is a benefactor who gives to the beggar who, emaciated, goes roaming, desirous of food.
   He becomes sufficient for him at his pleading entreaty, and he makes him his companion in the future.
4. He is no companion who does not give of his food to a companion, who, being in his company, accompanies him.
   He should turn away from him; this is not a home. He should seek another who gives, even a stranger.
5. The stronger man should give to one in need. He should look along the longer path,
   for riches turn like chariot-wheels: they come up to one man after another.
6. The undiscerning man finds food in vain. I speak the truth: it is just a deadly weapon for him.
   He does not prosper in compatriot, nor in companion. Who eats alone has only evil.
7. It's just when it plows that a plowshare makes a man well fed. It's just when he goes that a man "wraps up" the road with his feet.
   The formulator who speaks is more a winner than the one who doesn't; a friend who gives would be superior to one who doesn't.
8. The one-footed [=sun?] has stridden farther than the two-footed [=man?]; the two-footed overtakes the three-footed [=old man?] from behind.
   The four-footed [=dog?] comes at the call of the two-footed ones as it watches over the fivefold ones [=herds?], staying by them.
9. Two hands, even though the same, do not accomplish the same. Even two (cows) with the same mother do not yield the same milk.
   The heroic deeds even of twins are not the same. Two men, even though they are kin, do not give the same.

X.118 (944) Agni Rakṣohan

Urukṣaya Āmahīyava
9 verses: gāyatrī

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns the hymn to Agni Rakṣohan "Demon-Smiter," this aspect of the god is very muted in the hymn—found only in verses 1, 7–8 and rather tamely even there. The exuberantly and ingeniously violent punishments envisaged in the other Rakṣohan hymn in X (X.87) are entirely absent. Instead the dominant picture is of a peaceful sacrificial hearth in which the fire responds happily to the attentions, and especially the butter oblations, of his worshipers. Stylistically the hymn is characterized by chaining: the repetition of a word or phrase from one verse in the next, with a different word or phrase from that verse repeated in the following one.

1. O Agni, you strike down the devourer as you shine here among mortals
   in your own dwelling place, o you of blazing commandment.
2. You stand up when you are well bepoured. You rejoice in response to the ghee,
   when the ladles have converged on you.
3. When bepoured, he shines widely. Agni is to be reverently invoked with a hymn;
   his face is anointed with the ladle.
4. Honey-faced Agni, when bepoured, is fully anointed with ghee,
   bringing radiant goods as he shines.
5. Awakening, you become fully kindled, o you who carry the oblations to the gods;
   upon you do mortals call.
6. O mortals, serve immortal Agni with ghee,
   the undeceivable lord of the household.
7. With undeceivable flame, o Agni, burn demonic power.
   Shine as the herdsman of truth.
8. With your face, o Agni, flame against the sorceresses,
   as you shine among those dwelling far and wide [/the Urukṣayas].
9. With their hymns those dwelling far and wide [/the Urukṣayas] have fully kindled you, the oblation-carrier,
   the best sacrificer among the people descended from Manu.

X.119 (945) Self-Praise of the "Lapwing" [*laba*]

Laba Aindra
13 verses: gāyatrī

A famous and often translated 1st-person account of the experience of soma-drinking. Who the 1st-person speaker is meant to be has generated much discussion. The Anukramaṇī calls this the ātmastuti "self-praise" of a *laba* (a word that does not appear in the hymn or in the Ṛgveda), a particular type of bird, the lapwing—while commentators have generally identified the speaker either as the poet or as a particular god, usually Indra or Agni. We are inclined toward a version of the interpretation of George Thompson (2003). Thompson situates the hymn in the genre of ātmastuti, with its boastful self-assertion and the impersonation, or role-playing, by a poet of "a divine agent." Under this interpretation, the speaker is fundamentally the poet, but the poet consciously taking on the voice and identity of another entity or entities—in our view, both that of a bird and that of a god, indeed of Indra.

The presence of the poet is clearest in his claims about his mind and the thought that approaches him and that he shapes (vss. 1, 4–5). It is even possibly visible in the spirited refrain—"Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!"—in which the speaker interrogates himself and only after this internal verbal exchange asserts that he has consumed soma. (One might suggest, only partially in jest, that Indra would not need this verbal self-reassurance.) To characterize the soma-drinking experience the poet borrows the identity of a bird, suggesting that the overwhelming sensation is that of flight, lifting him up (vss. 2–3), making the people on the ground seem impossibly small and insignificant (vs. 6) and his own wings large enough to cover the cosmos (vss. 7, 11). But this prodigious creature cannot be *only* a bird, for the speaker boasts of his control of the cosmic spaces and his ability to move the earth at will (vss. 8–10). These boasts are most appropriate to Indra, who commonly manipulates cosmic entities, who is most likely to engage in self-vaunting ātmastuti (cf., e.g., X.48–49), and who is the archetypal soma-drinker among the gods. The hymn ends (or almost ends) with the apparent epiphany of Indra in verse 12, triumphantly announced by "here I am" (*ahám asmi*) and calling attention to his presence in the ritual arena.

The final verse (13) seems an anticlimax, and its contents also sit uneasily in the rest of the hymn. The identity that this 1st-person speaker claims, that of oblation-carrier (*havyavā́hana*), is responsible for the view that the speaker throughout the hymn is Agni, for *havyavā́hana* and its variant *havyaváh* are always epithets of that god. But the fact that Agni speaks this verse does not require that he be the speaker in the rest of the hymn. In our view this verse, like many final verses, marks a shift of subject or a coda. The speaker is indeed Agni. It seems possible that Indra's epiphany in the preceding verse has brought him face to face with the principal god of the ritual and the ritual ground, namely Agni, and that Agni borrows the rhetoric of Indra to make his own counter-boast and assert the importance of his own role—though his somewhat pedestrian self-comparison to a well-equipped household contrasts almost comically with the soaring and exuberant language of the rest of the hymn.

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1. Yes for sure! Yes (says) my mind: I could win cow and horse—yes!
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
2. Forth like raging winds, the draughts have lifted me up.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
3. The draughts have lifted me up, like swift horses a chariot.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
4. A thought has come up close to me, like a bellowing cow to her dear son.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
5. Like an artisan a chariot-box, I bend the thought around with my heart.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
6. Because the five peoples have not appeared to me to be even a speck...
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
7. Because both world-halves are not equal to even one wing of mine...
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
8. By my greatness I have surmounted heaven and this great earth.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
9. Blast it! I will set down this earth here—or over here.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
10. I will keep smiting the earth to blazes—here or over there.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
11. In heaven is one wing of mine; I have dragged the other below.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
12. Here I am—greater than great, sped upward to the clouds.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
13. As a household that is properly equipped, I journey as the carrier of the oblations to the gods.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!

X.120 (946) Indra

Bṛhaddiva Ātharvaṇa
9 verses: triṣṭubh

For most of its length this hymn is a fairly straightforward praise of Indra, his powers, and his victories. There is special emphasis also on the relation between Indra and his verbally active "helpers." The relationship is hierarchal—Indra is supreme—but also reciprocal, in that the helpers cheer him on and fortify him for his exploits (esp. vss. 1–4). The helpers are not named; the two most prominent Indra myths, Vṛtra and Vala, both feature a troop aiding or encouraging Indra: the Maruts and the Aṅgirases respectively. It is thus possible that either or both groups are meant here, and, further, that human poets are assimilated to these divine choruses (see vs. 4).

The encouragement becomes more personal in verse 5, where a 1st-person speaker assumes the role of verbal inciter. This is surely the poet himself, but, we will claim, not a mere human poet. The last two verses of the hymn (8–9) summarize the performance context of the hymn. Verse 8 begins "Bṛhaddiva speaks these sacred formulations to Indra," and Bṛhaddiva is named again as the poet in verse 9 (as well as being so identified by the Anukramaṇī). But verse 9 introduces a puzzle or a surprise, for it begins, "In this way Bṛhaddiva addressed his own self—that is, Indra." It is difficult to read the sentence in any other way, though many have tried, but if Indra is the same as Bṛhaddiva, who is Bṛhaddiva?

A way to a solution to this conundrum has been presented by Hanns-Peter Schmidt, though he himself does not discuss this hymn. As Schmidt convincingly argues (1968), Bṛhaspati was originally an epithet and aspect of Indra, especially in the Vala myth, in which Indra uses not brute strength but verbal skill to open the Vala cave and release the stolen cows. Bṛhaspati becomes detached from Indra and treated as a separate god, but this process is a protracted one and can be observed happening in the Ṛgveda. We suggest that this hymn reflects an awareness of their original identity and their growing separateness, with the verbally adroit Bṛhaspati, master of sacred formulations (*bráhman*; see vss. 5d and 8a), praising his other self, the king and victorious warrior Indra. The name Bṛhaddiva (lit., "possessing lofty heaven") is reminiscent of Bṛhaspati, and the sacred formulations he addresses to Indra in verse 8 precisely concern the Vala myth, the locus of their identification.

1. Just this was the foremost among living beings, from which the mighty one of vibrant manly spirit was born.
   As soon as he is born, he melts down his rivals, while all his helpers cheer him on.
2. Having grown strong through his swelling power, he of much might, as rival to the Dāsa, creates terror for him.
   On your winning the animate and the inanimate, (your helpers) bellow to you together at the presentation (of the soma), at the revels.
3. All bend their will toward you, even when these helpers are twice or three times as many.
   "Send the sweeter than sweet surging together with the sweet. With honey, battle for that honey yonder."
4. For it is even in those words that at every revel the inspired poets cheer you on as you win the stakes.
   Stretch your mightier (bow) taut, bold one. Let the sorcerers of evil ways not deceive you.
5. Through you we have become exultant in our battles, as we see before us the many fights to be fought.
   I rouse your weapons with my words; I hone your vital powers with my sacred formulation.

6. (I praise) him who is worthy of praise, the craftsman possessing many forms, the strongest Āptya of Āptyas.
   He will shatter the seven Dānus with his swelling strength; he will overcome the many opposing forces.
7. You deposited this, both the nearer and the farther, in the house in which you helped with your help.
   You cause the two parents [=Heaven and Earth], who were in motion, to stay still, and then you spur on many deeds.
8. Bṛhaddiva speaks these sacred formulations fortissimo to Indra: "the first to win the sun,
   he has dominion over the great cowpen of the sovereign king, and he opened up all the doors that are his own."
9. In this way, great Bṛhaddiva, the Atharvan, addressed his own self—that is, Indra.
   The stainless sisters, who stay by their mother, speed him with swelling strength and make him strong.

X.121 (947) Ka "Who?"

Hiraṇyagarbha Prājāpatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn takes the form of a cosmogony, but here the creative principle is unnamed or has no name. Rather than declaring its deity, the hymn's refrain is a question: "Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?" Although without a name, the deity has a form. In the first verse the poet calls it *hiraṇyagarbhá* "the golden embryo" (vs. 1a), the yolk of an egg (cf. Lommel 1939), thus anticipating later myths of creation from a world-egg (e.g., Vāmana Purāṇa Saromāhātmya XXII.17). But the "golden embryo" is also the sun, which here is born as the center of the cosmos. Toward the end of the hymn, in verse 7, the poet gives the still unnamed principle a second identity not just as a god but as "the life of the gods" (*devā́nām... ásuḥ*). The last verse finally attaches a name to the unnamed principle, but this verse is a later addition (Oldenberg 1888: 248), reflecting a redactional effort not to leave the mystery of this principle unresolved. In that verse the deity is revealed to be Prajāpati, the "Lord of Creatures," who in the Brāhmaṇas is both the creator god and the archetype of the sacrifice. Later tradition confirms the identity of this principle by understanding the constantly repeated *ká* "who?" to be a name of Prajāpati. Accordingly the Anukramaṇī designates Ka as the deity of this hymn.

In a very perceptive interpretation of the hymn Proferes (2007: 140–41) shows the relation of this hymn to the ideology of kingship. In the royal unction ritual the king is reborn by means of the unction waters as a being with the power and brilliance of the sun. This hymn reproduces the elements of that rite: the conception of an embryo (vss. 1, 7) and a ruler (vss. 1, 2, 3), the waters (vss. 7, 8, 9) that bear an embryo (vs. 7), and the birth of fire (vs. 7). The unnamed principle encompasses the entire world (vss. 4, 5, 10), and its power extends in every direction (vs. 4) and over every being (vss. 2, 3, 8), as the king (ideally) is the master of the world, whose power extends everywhere. Likewise, the unnamed principle supports the world—making it firm (vs. 5) and steady (vss. 5, 6)—and gives it life (vss. 2, 7), as the king maintains and preserves the world.

Structurally, the hymn is organized as an almost unbroken series of dependent clauses. The first series of relative clauses, hanging off the main clauses in verse 1, lasts from verses 2 through 6. Verse 7 then re-establishes the pattern, for it has a main clause, on which the relative clauses in verse 8 depend. The phrase "he alone existed" in verses 1b and 8c create a ring, which defines the boundaries of the main body of the hymn. Outside this ring and outside the main body of the hymn, verse 9 repeats in miniature the pattern of preceding verses. It has a main clause in 9a, which is followed by three more relative clauses and concluded by the refrain. The verse is an appeal to the unnamed deity to do no harm, making it also thematically distinct from the main body of the hymn. Like verse 10, it too may have been a later addition, as Thieme (1964: 69) has asserted.

1. The golden embryo evolved in the beginning. Born the lord of what came to be, he alone existed.
   He supports the earth and the heaven here— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
2. Who is the giver of breath, the giver of strength; whose command all honor, whose command the gods honor;
   whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
3. Who became king of the breathing, blinking, moving world—just he alone by his greatness;
   who is lord of the two-footed and four-footed creatures here— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
4. Whose are these snow-covered mountains [=the Himalayas] in their greatness; whose is the sea together with the world-stream, they say;
   whose are these directions, whose (their) two arms [=the zenith and nadir?]— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
5. By whom the mighty heaven and earth were made firm; by whom the sun was steadied, by whom the firmament;
   who was the one measuring out the airy realm in the midspace— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
6. Toward whom the two battle lines [=heaven and earth] looked, steadied with his help, though trembling in mind,
   (those) upon which the risen sun radiates. – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?

7. When the lofty waters came, receiving everything as an embryo and giving birth to the fire,
then the life of the gods evolved alone— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
8. Who by his greatness surveyed the waters receiving (ritual) skill (as an embryo) and giving birth to the sacrifice;
who, the god over gods, alone existed. – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
9. Let him not do us harm—he who is the progenitor of earth or who, with foundations that are real, engendered heaven,
and who engendered the gleaming, lofty waters. – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
10. O Prajāpati! No one other than you has encompassed all these things that have been born.
Let what we desire as we make oblation to you be ours. We would be lords of riches.

X.122 (948) Agni

Citramahas Vāsiṣṭha
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 1, 5

Attributed to a Vasiṣṭhid by the Anukramaṇī, this hymn ends (vs. 8) with a mention of the Vasiṣṭhas and with the Vasiṣṭha refrain from Maṇḍala VII. It is a fairly standard praise of Agni, deploying a wide range of his standard epithets and ritual roles and titles. The ritual is the complete focus of the hymn, and the rewards that the sacrificer will receive from properly performing it and serving Agni are also at the forefront. There is much recycling of vocabulary.

1. Him, of brilliant might like a Vasu, will I hymn—the precious, kindly guest, not to be despised.
He will bestow all-nourishing riches—Agni the Hotar, the Houselord—and an abundance of heroes.
2. Taking pleasure, Agni, delight in my speech, knowing all the (ritual) patterns, o very effective one.
You with your cloak of ghee—set the course for the sacred formulation. Following your commandment the gods begot (it).
3. As you, the immortal, circle the seven domains, as you do pious work for the pious, be generous to the one who performs (rituals) well
with wealth rich in heroes ready to hand, o Agni. Whoever has reached toward you with a kindling stick, take pleasure in him.

4. The beacon of the sacrifice, the foremost one set in front do the seven (priests) offering oblations reverently invoke as prizewinner—
Agni who hears them, the bull with ghee on his back, the god who gives to the giver an abundance of heroes.
5. You are the foremost messenger, worthy to be chosen. Being summoned for immortal (soma?), become exhilarated (on it).
You did the Maruts groom in the house of the pious; you did the Bhṛgus illuminate with praises.
6. In milking all-nourishing refreshment out of the good milker for the sacrificer who is pleasing to the sacrifice, o very effective one,
and in making the circuit three times around the truths, around the sacrifice, while shining ghee-backed, o Agni, you well display your effective power.
7. Just to you, at the brightenings of this dawn, did the sons of Manu perform sacrifice, on making you their messenger.
You have the gods strengthened to be magnified, rubbing melted butter down (on your body) at the ceremony, o Agni.
8. The Vasiṣṭhas have called you down, the prizewinner, as they hymn you, o Agni—the ritual adepts at the rites.
Uphold among the sacrificers the thriving of wealth. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

X.123 (949) Vena

Vena Bhārgava
8 verses: triṣṭubh

A famous and mystical hymn, whose opacity still defies complete comprehension although its main features are clear. The subject is announced in the first words of the first verse: "this Seeker" (*ayám vénaḥ*), and the Anukramaṇī also attributes the hymn to the same figure, or his multiform: Vena Bhārgava. This poet is also credited with the soma hymn IX.85 by the Anukramaṇī, and the last four verses of that hymn (9–12), which contain phraseology quite similar to X.123 and which we might term "Vena without Tears," help clarify X.123. What is at issue is the common identification of Soma and the Sun, united in the Seeker figure, who is also identified as a Gandharva (vss. 4 and 7) and as a bird (vss. 5–6). Most verses are applicable to either Soma or the Sun, and, as is common in hymns with such dual referents, the effort of fashioning phraseology that works for both referents accounts for many of the enigmas in the hymn, beginning with the birth and first appearance of the Seeker in verses 1–2.

It is noteworthy that the Seeker is also eagerly sought: the inspired poets pursue him (vss. 1, 4, probably 6), as do women seeking a husband (vs. 2) and mothers (vs.

3)—both feminine references probably standing for the hymns produced by these poets. Needless to say, both Soma and the Sun are regularly the object of such poetic attentions, and the intimate bond between poets and what they celebrate is a prominent theme in the hymn.

Less prominent, but perhaps not less important, is the theme of name-and-form. This first surfaces explicitly in verse 4, where it is their recognition of the form of the Seeker that inspires the poets' longing for him. In the same verse the Seeker, as Gandharva, finds "the immortal names." Later, in verse 7, this same Gandharva engenders his own names. These verses seem to adumbrate the later preoccupation with name and form as representing the creation of the multiplicity of objects in the world by the division of the formless into "forms" and the assignment of "names" to each in order to differentiate them. This theme is treated with great skill and subtlety also in III.38. In this hymn here the Gandharva's engendering his own names in the penultimate verse of the hymn leads to a climax of sorts in the final verse (8), though one that is quite downplayed. In that final verse the undifferentiated figure of Soma/Sun is actually divided into its two constituent parts, though neither is mentioned by name. The first half of the verse concerns the drop (*drapsá*), a word regularly used of Soma, while the second half has as its subject *bhānú* "radiance," which is especially characteristic of the Sun. Through the power of the poets' perception of the true "form" of things and their ability to assign them "names," Sun and Soma emerge at the end of the hymn as separate, though mutually dependent, entities.

1. This Seeker here spurs on those females whose embryo is the dappled one—he whose afterbirth is light—in the measuring out of the airy realm.
   At the union of the waters and the sun, the inspired poets lick him with their thoughts like an infant (calf).
2. The Seeker raises up a wave from the sea. The cloud-born one, the top of the delightful one has been sighted,
   as the glint on the back of truth, on its upper surface. (All) the "brides-to-be" have roared toward the same womb.
3. The mothers of the calf, who are many though stemming from the same nest, stand there bellowing [/yearning] toward the same (womb).
   Having stridden onto the back of truth, the voices lick at the immortal honey.
4. Recognizing his form, the inspired poets longed (for him). Because they came toward the cry of the wild buffalo,
   approaching with truth they mounted onto the stream. The Gandharva found the immortal names.
5. The Apsaras, the maiden smiling coyly at her lover, bears him in the highest distant heaven.
   He roamed among the wombs of the dear one [masc.], himself being dear; he sat on a golden wing—he is the Seeker—
6. When they, seeking with their heart, gazed upon you, an eagle flying to the vault,
   the golden-winged messenger of Varuṇa, the (omen-)bird fluttering in the womb of Yama.
7. The Gandharva stood erect upon the vault, facing outward, bearing his dazzling weapons;
   wearing a fragrant cloak, (lovely) to be seen like the sun, he engendered his own dear names.
8. When the (soma-)drop goes to the sea, seeing with the eye of a vulture in the spreading expanse,
   the (sun's) radiance with its bright blaze, finding pleasure (in it [=drop]), has created its own dear (names) in the third realm.

X.124 (950) Various Gods

Agni (2–4), Agni, Varuṇa, and Soma (1, 5–9)
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7

SWJ

This dialogue hymn may be one of the most discussed poems in the Ṛgveda, and the number, variety, and contradictory nature of its interpretations are truly astounding—far too many and too diverse to be summed up here. (For a brief characterization of many of these treatments see W. E. Hale [1986: 86–92], and for a recent and intriguing interpretation see Proferes [2007: 121–27].)

The hymn begins with an address to Agni by Indra (vs. 1); Agni answers in verse 2 and, in many interpretations, continues to speak in verses 3 and 4—though I follow the opinion that Varuṇa and Soma are the speakers of those two verses. Indra returns as speaker in verses 5 and 6, addressed to Varuṇa and Soma respectively. The last four verses (7–10) appear to be the words of the poet.

In his speech Indra is attempting to coax the other gods addressed to join him in his new sacrifice, leaving behind their old ways and their old kin group. The gods need little persuasion. After Indra promises to make him the oblation-bearer in verse 1, Agni agrees with alacrity to go "as a god, from the non-god" and "from my own fellowship to an alien lineage" (vs. 2). In verse 3 Varuṇa (if he is the speaker; otherwise Agni again) echoes this proposed journey, in the expression "I go from the non-sacrificial to the sacrificial portion," while in verse 4 Soma (again, if he is the speaker) "chooses Indra" and "leaves the father," ending the verse with the ringing declaration: "the kingship has made a revolution."

Thus the subject of the hymn seems to be nothing less than a radical political and religious reconfiguration, with shifting alliances leading to a fundamental

realignment of the major divinities and to a new sacrificial order and a new rule. What has intensified the scholarly debate about this hymn is the assumed identity of the losing side. In verse 3 we find "Father Asura" (or "the lordly father"), presumably the same father that Soma leaves after choosing Indra in verse 4. In verse 5 Indra asserts that the Asuras (or "lords") have lost their *māyā* or "magic powers," while the first divinity to leave, Agni, begins verse 2 with the emphatic *ádevād devấḥ* "from a non-god (I) a god..." It has thus been difficult not to consider this hymn in the context of the vexing question about the Asura–Deva rivalry so prominent in Vedic prose, mirrored in the Avestan Ahura–Daēuua split, but complicated by the Ṛgveda, which shows almost no signs of such a rivalry or even of a defined group of Asuras distinct from the Devas. Despite these Ṛgvedic lacunae it was still tempting to see in this hymn a depiction of the overthrow of the Asuras by the Devas and a number of scholars have done so, although there are important counterindications—not least the passage just cited where Agni asserts his identity as a god even as he is leaving his own kin-group, supposedly the Asuras.

I will not pursue this particular question further, for want of space (and a disinclination to engage in a debate unlikely ever to be satisfactorily resolved). I will, however, point out a striking feature of the hymn that seems not to have been sufficiently noted. Whoever the two opposing parties in this revolution were, the power shift from one to the other was remarkably peaceful, especially for the Ṛgveda, where most conflicts have violence as their defining characteristic. This peacefulness is emphasized throughout the hymn. Agni refers to the non-god he left as "being kindly disposed" (*śivá*), apologetically describing himself as "unkind" (*áśiva*) in leaving (vs. 2c). Varuṇa seems to counter this in verse 3c by proclaiming to Father Asura that Agni was indeed kind (*śéva*) (in my interpretation: this pāda has been variously interpreted). In verse 7 Varuṇa is said to have released the waters "without an excess of power," and the waters thus released "make peace with each other." In verse 8 Indra "dwells peacefully" amid his subjects. The only violence in the hymn is prospective: the smashing of Vṛtra foreseen by Indra in verse 6, once Soma has allied himself with Indra. The hymn is all about negotiation and a sort of sacrificial horse-trading: see Indra's offers of important roles to Agni (1c), Varuṇa (5d), and Soma (6d). Indra even begs Varuṇa to "love" him (5b). The principal figures "choose" their side and their ruler (Soma in 4b and even the female rivers in 8b) and make their own moves, as emphasized by the repeated verbs of motion ("come!" 1a; "going... I go,... I leave,... I go" 2; "I go" 3d; "I leave... they bestir themselves... (I) coming here" 4; "come!" 5d; "come forth!" 6c). The peaceful and voluntary nature of the change in alliances—the lack of retaliation by the deserted side, the lack of interest in pursuing their advantage and crushing their opponents by the winning side—distinguishes this episode not only from almost every other such situation in the Ṛgveda but also from the perpetual conflict and reflexive hostility between Asuras and Devas in middle Vedic literature—an indication, perhaps, that that rivalry is not the context in which to interpret this hymn.

Although, given the apparent failure of so many Ṛgvedic interpreters to identify the deserted party successfully, it is foolhardy to suggest my own candidate, I will make an unemphatic essay in that direction. Note first that the figure most clearly left behind by the deserting gods is a "father"—qualified once as Father Asura/lordly father (3c), once just as father (4b). Note also the first half of verse 6, where Indra points to the sun and its previous preeminence on the scale of value, but suggests that it is now eclipsed or rivaled by the light of the broad midspace. Let us also remember the heads of the pantheons in Greek and Roman mythology, Zeus Patēr and Iuppiter respectively, and the curious fact that the cognate figure in ancient India, formulaically transparent Dyaus *Pitar* "*Father* Sky/Heaven," has no comparable prominence in Vedic mythology though he is reasonably well attested in the texts. On putting these clues together, it seems possible that the old sky-centered religion focused on the inherited paternal divinity Dyaus quietly gave way to one located in realms closer to men, where divinities concerned themselves with issues important to mankind, such as the release of the waters (vss. 7–8), and actively sought the praise and sacrificial offerings of men (vs. 9 and, by implication, throughout the hymn). Dyaus Pitar remained a revered figure but played little role in the sacrificial system. There was thus no violent rupture in the social or religious fabric, just a peaceful fading into well-but-perfunctorily-honored irrelevance for Dyaus, displaced by ritual-centered gods like Agni and Soma and those deeply involved with men's affairs, ethically (Varuṇa) or martially (Indra).

JPB

In the introduction above, SWJ expresses well-considered doubt about the possibility of ever resolving the interpretive difficulties of this hymn. In trying once again to understand the narrative and situation behind it, I know I risk adding yet another not quite convincing interpretation to an already large stack of not quite convincing interpretations. But this hymn is difficult to avoid, because it is central to one of the more intriguing questions of Vedic religious history: When and how does the story of the conflict of Devas and Asuras develop? There is little possible evidence and still less likely evidence in the Ṛgveda for this narrative staple of the later Vedic and classical traditions. We have pointed out several passages that might reflect it, but even these are not certain (see, for example, X.53.4 and 157.4). However, as my colleague pointed out above, a number of scholars have cited X.124 not only as evidence for the definition of the Asuras as a group of deities distinct from and in opposition to Devas but also as evidence—the *only* evidence—for an elaborate narrative in which former Asuras shift to the side of the Devas (see, for example, Brown 1919: 100, Kuiper 1975, Oberlies 1998: 391).

In Brereton (forthcoming b), I have proposed a different approach to the hymn. I try to show that this hymn asserts a human claim of succession after the death of a previous ruler. The hymn is indeed a dialogue, but I identify the speakers differently

from their assignment below. Verse 1, I believe, is not in the voice of Indra, but in that of the sacrificer, in whose rite the hymn was recited. The first three pādas are a fairly standard invitation to Agni to come to the sacrifice. It is only in the last pāda that the verse takes an unexpected turn: "For a long time," it states, Agni has "lain in long darkness." That is to say, the ritual fire has been extinguished. The later Veda prescribes that the ritual fire be extinguished at the death of a sacrificer, and therefore at least one possibility is that this summons to Agni is a summons to return after such a death. Verse 2 is Agni's response: he has departed from one who was a mortal, a "non-god," but he now returns to his new life as the sacrificial fire of a living sacrificer. In verse 3 the new sacrificer welcomes Agni, who previously was the guest of the old sacrificer, to the "many domains of truth," the places where the new sacrificer has now installed the sacrificial fires. The sacrificer then proclaims a kindness for his "lordly father," the deceased sacrificer, thus identifying the old sacrificer as both his own father and a "lord," a ruler. The kindness he offers is the continuation of his father's ritual performance, which will guarantee his father's life in the realm of the ancestors, and in this way he converts Agni's "unkindness" in deserting his father to an act of kindness. In verse 4 Agni once again speaks. For many years he acted "within it"—if *antár asmin* refers to the sacrifice obliquely mentioned in verse 3—or "within him," within the sphere or authority of the old sacrificer. But now Agni chooses "Indra." As in IV.42, the coronation hymn of King Trasadasyu, "Indra" here is the new king. "The kingship has made a revolution," Agni declares, for there is a new king, and Agni promises to do what he can to help in the institution of that king's rule. To this the new sacrificer and king replies, now addressing Varuṇa, who has been made present by Agni. He says that rival lords lack the ability to rule, and therefore Varuṇa should come and govern with him and in support of him.

In my view the dialogue ends with verse 5. In verse 6 the sacrificer and new king makes a final declaration, in which he explicitly identifies himself with Indra, here by assuming Indra's most characteristic deed, the destruction of Vṛtra. The final three verses are in the voice of the priestly narrator. In verse 7 he identifies the new king with Varuṇa by attributing to him the deeds of Varuṇa, and in verse 8 the new king once again becomes Indra. Finally in verse 9 the sage poets "discern" Indra. And where do they discern him? In the king, who acts in accordance with the praise that follows him!

Thus, the hymn parallels IV.42, in which Trasadasyu acts as both Varuṇa and Indra in peace and in war. Unlike Trasadasyu, however, the claimant here seems to have had opposition, which would have made the ritual affirmation of his rule all the more essential. In this interpretation, *ásura* "lord" or "lordly" dissolves as a designation for a group of gods. In its two occurrences, in the singular in verse 3 and in the plural in verse 5, *ásura* refers to human lords, not to gods or antigods or old gods. And not only does it refer to humans, but also to quite different humans: in verse 3 to the predecessor of the sacrificer and in verse 5 to the sacrificer's enemies or rivals.

1. [Indra:] Come right up to this sacrifice of ours here, Agni, with its five tracks, three circles, seven threads.
You will be our oblation-carrier and the one who goes in front of us. For a long time indeed you have lain in long darkness.
2. [Agni:] Going in concealment and hiding, I go, as a god, from the non-god, foreseeing immortality for myself.
When I unkindly leave (him), though he is kindly disposed, from my own fellowship I go to an alien lineage.
3. [Varuṇa:] Seeing (him [=Agni]) as the guest of the other branch, I measure out the many domains of truth.
I proclaim (him [=Agni]) as kindly to the lordly father [/Father Asura]. From the one without sacrifice I go to a sacrificial portion.
4. [Soma:] I have "done" many years within him. (Now) choosing Indra, I leave the father.
Agni, Soma, Varuṇa—they bestir themselves. The kingship has made a revolution; I help it (along), by coming here.
5. [Indra:] These lords [/Asuras] have lost their magic powers. And if you, Varuṇa, will love me,
sifting untruth out from truth, o king, come here to the overlordship of my kingdom.
6. [Indra:] Here is the sun—it alone used to be the thing of value. (But now) there is this coming to light—the broad midspace.
Let us two smash Vṛtra—come forth, Soma. We shall sacrifice to you with an oblation, though you yourself are an oblation.
7. The poet with his poetic craft has fastened the form (of the sun?) in heaven. Without excess of power Varuṇa released the waters.
Making peace with each other like (co)wives, the rivers, (though) clear, each variously bear his color.
8. They follow his preeminent Indrian power. He dwells peacefully among them who delight in their independent power.
They, on choosing him as clans choose a king, recoiling turned away from Vṛtra.
9. They say that a goose is the yokemate of those who recoiled, a goose roaming in the fellowship of the heavenly waters.
The one roaming hither and yon in pursuit of the verse of praise have the sage poets discerned to be Indra through their inspired thought.

X.125 (951) Speech

Vāc Āmbhṛṇa
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 2

Another very famous hymn, to the goddess Speech (Vāc), it is couched as an ātmastuti or "self-praise," and this aspect is certainly quite insistent. The 1st-person speaker uses the word "I" (*ahám*) fifteen times (not counting other cases

of this pronoun), along with numerous 1st-person present-tense verbs. With the fame of the hymn comes a certain carelessness on the part of its many translators, who have tended to smooth out the rough and puzzling places. See, for example, verse 3d, where a more fluent and expected expression might be "I have many stations and enter many things" (compare Doniger O'Flaherty's "I dwell in many places and enter into many forms" and Maurer's "with many a place and entering upon many a form"), but the undoubted causative verb form in the second phrase makes that easy rendering impossible. The praises that Speech heaps upon herself are not necessarily for the things that we expect her to boast about, and as translators and interpreters we must follow the lead of her own grammatical choices.

She begins by asserting her companionship with, indeed her support for, the primary gods and groups thereof (vss. 1–2), as well as for the mortal sacrificer. In verse 3 she sounds the common theme of the divisions of speech, though not in the usual way; in the phrase noted above (3d), she asserts that not only is she found in many places—that is, she has been much subdivided—but that many things enter her—that is, she also encompasses the many entities that make up the world. These contrastive, mirrored images are part of her totalizing project.

Verse 4 and 5 are the center of the hymn and its crux, defined as an omphalos by the framing forms of *ā́-√viś* "enter" in 3d and 6d and by the repeated *vadāmi* "I speak / tell" of 4d and 5a. In the first three pādas of verse 4 she depicts speech as that on which the other operations of life depend, but in a curiously oblique way—not through speech directly but through eating. She identifies eating as the central operation and herself as the instrument and facilitator of eating ("through me he eats food"), with the other senses ("who sees, who breathes, who hears...") dependent on the eating. (Other translators tend to elide the distinction between the main clause "he eats food" and the subordinate clauses "who sees," etc., but the contrast is too marked to ignore.) What can she mean by this odd statement? If we are right, (at least) two different things. On the one hand, she is laying claim to the mouth, the organ that engages in both eating and speaking. The other sense organs—eyes (sight), nose (breathing), ears (hearing)—are not involved with either operation. Eating is essential to life: one can't see, breathe, or hear without being alive, which requires food, and so, by their joint location in the mouth, Speech can assert her primary role in eating and thus in staying alive. By this argument, all other sense activities depend on Speech. But we think there is also another, more pointed message here, about the poet, whom she is about to address. The poet makes his livelihood ("eats his food") by producing poetic speech from the inspiration of the goddess Speech, and his sense activity, including the ways in which he receives inspiration, by seeing and hearing especially, as well as his life depends on her.

In the final pāda of verse 4 she addresses the poet directly, with a tour de force of phonological play, much remarked upon in scholarly literature: *śrudhí śruta śraddhivám te vadāmi* "Listen, o you who are listened to: it's a trustworthy thing I tell you." The poet is the one who is "listened to" in the world: his verbal products have a privileged status, and she makes him a conduit of her own message. In the following verse (5) she explains how she chooses and anoints her choice as poet and what qualities she invests him with.

After the omphalos verses she returns (vss. 6–8) to a more general and wider focus, asserting her pervasion of Heaven and Earth, indeed of all the worlds, both horizontally and vertically, and even beyond them. Quite striking, and also superficially unclear, is her statement in verse 7a, literally "I give birth to the/a father on his head" (*ahám suve pitáram asya mūrdhán*). In contrast to most interpretations of this statement, we interpret it in light of a common use of the phrase "the head of heaven" in the Ṛgveda as an epithet for Agni (e.g., III.2.14 *agním mūrdhā́naṃ diváḥ*). The father is "Father Heaven" (Dyaus Pitar), but "his head" is then actually a reference to fire, most particularly the ritual fire in its deified form Agni. If we are correct, Vāc is returning to the notion of sacrificial speech found earlier in the hymn, implying that speech produced on the ritual ground beside the sacrificial fire in a sense creates and sustains the cosmos. From this restricted space, namely the locus of the sacrifice, speech spreads across all realms and up to heaven. (Under this interpretation, the womb in the waters of 7b could refer to the waters of the soma sacrifice, though this is not necessary.)

In sum, our version of a beloved hymn to a beloved goddess is stranger and perhaps less lovable than its usual interpretations, but also reflects the crafty indirection of the goddess herself.

1. I roam with the Rudras and the Vasus, I with the Ādityas and the All Gods.
   I bear both Mitra and Varuṇa, I Indra and Agni, I both the Aśvins.
2. I bear the swollen soma, I Tvaṣṭar and Pūṣan and Bhaga.
   I establish wealth for the man offering the oblation, who pursues (his ritual duties) well, who sacrifices and presses.
3. I am ruler, assembler of goods, observer foremost among those deserving the sacrifice.
   Me have the gods distributed in many places—so that I have many stations and cause many things to enter (me).
4. Through me he eats food—whoever sees, whoever breathes, whoever hears what is spoken.
   Without thinking about it, they live on me. Listen, o you who are listened to: it's a trustworthy thing I tell you.
5. Just I myself say this, savored by gods and men:
   "Whom I love, just him I make formidable, him a formulator, him a seer, him of good wisdom."
6. I stretch the bow for Rudra, for his arrow to smash the hater of the sacred formulation.
   I make combat for the people. I have entered Heaven and Earth.

7. I give birth to Father (Heaven?) on his (own?) head [=Agni?]; my womb
   is in the waters, in the sea.
   Thence I spread forth across all worlds, and yonder heaven with its
   height I touch.
8. I, just like the wind, blow forth, grasping at all worlds,
   beyond heaven, beyond this earth here—of such size in my greatness
   have I come into being.

X.126 (952) All Gods

Kulmalabarhiṣa Śailūṣi or Aṃhomuc Vāmadevya
8 verses: upariṣṭādbṛhatī, except triṣṭubh 8

A simple hymn whose contents are shaped in great part by its meter. The first seven verses are in upariṣṭādbṛhatī, technically 8 8 8 12. But the last four syllables of the final pāda are a refrain, "beyond hatreds" (*áti dviṣaḥ*), giving the impression of an anuṣṭubh verse (8 8 8 8) with a decorative flourish at the end. The principal dedicands of the hymn are the Ādityas, or rather the trio Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. These appear in scrambled order in verse 1cd, but for the rest of the upariṣṭādbṛhatī verses (2–7) occupy the entire second pāda in fixed order. This punctuation of each verse with two fixed phrases, each at the end of its hemistich, subordinates the message of each verse to its structure. Fortunately the message is elementary: the gods in question should lead us out of difficulties and to shelter and safety.

A few other gods appear in the hymn: Rudra with the Maruts, and Indra and Agni in verse 5, and Agni in the appended and metrically distinct final verse (8), but their presence barely registers in the very Ādityan atmosphere.

1. O gods, neither narrow straits nor difficult passage reach that mortal
   whom Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa lead of one accord—beyond
   hatreds.
2. For we choose that—o Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   by which you rescue a mortal from narrow straits and lead him—beyond
   hatreds.
3. They are here to aid us now—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   the best leaders in leading us and the best deliverers in delivering us—
   beyond hatreds.
4. You protect everyone all around—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman.
   May we be in the dear shelter of you, o you of good guidance—beyond
   hatreds.
5. The Ādityas (lead) beyond failures—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman.
   We would call on powerful Rudra along with the Maruts, on Indra and
   Agni, for well-being—beyond hatreds.

6. They are our leaders across—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   beyond all difficult passages—the kings of the settled domains—beyond
   hatreds.
7. Let them extend blessing to us to aid us—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   and broad shelter—the Ādityas, when we implore them—beyond hatreds.
8. Just as then you released the buffalo-cow bound by the foot, you good
   ones worthy of the sacrifice,
   so release constraint from us. (Let) our lifetime be further lengthened,
   o Agni.

X.127 (953) Night

Kuśika Saubhara or Rātri Bhāradvājī
8 verses: gāyatrī

In contrast to the numerous hymns dedicated to the lovely and welcome Dawn, Night is barely celebrated in the Ṛgveda, only in this one hymn. The night described here is not that of the frightening and formless darkness so often mentioned in the text, but rather starry night, who has beauties of her own. In fact, she is described in places (see vss. 2 and 3c especially) with phraseology more appropriate to Dawn, whose own advent is anticipated in verse 7.

1. Goddess Night, while coming hither, has looked about in many places
   with her eyes.
   She has laid on herself all beauties.
2. The immortal goddess has filled the broad (midspace), its depths and
   heights;
   with light she repels the darkness.
3. She has expelled her sister, Dawn—she, the goddess, while coming hither—
   and darkness will race away.
4. (Be) here for us today—you at whose journey we have settled down,
   like birds on their nest in the tree.
5. Down have settled the roving bands, down the footed, down the winged,
   down even the falcons in their busyness.
6. Keep away the she-wolf and the wolf; keep away the thief, o Night.
   But for us become easy to traverse.
7. Darkness, fully ornamented, black, smeared all over (with stars), has
   approached me.
   O Dawn, settle it like debts.
8. Right up to you have I driven (this hymn), like cows (to their pen).
   Choose it, o Daughter of Heaven,
   o Night—like a praise song for a victor.

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7. I give birth to Father (Heaven?) on his (own?) head [=Agni?]; my womb
   is in the waters, in the sea.
   Thence I spread forth across all worlds, and yonder heaven with its
   height I touch.
8. I, just like the wind, blow forth, grasping at all worlds,
   beyond heaven, beyond this earth here—of such size in my greatness
   have I come into being.

X.126 (952) All Gods

Kulmalabarhiṣa Śailūṣi or Aṃhomuc Vāmadevya
8 verses: upariṣṭādbṛhatī, except triṣṭubh 8

A simple hymn whose contents are shaped in great part by its meter. The first seven verses are in upariṣṭādbṛhatī, technically 8 8 8 12. But the last four syllables of the final pāda are a refrain, "beyond hatreds" (*áti dviṣaḥ*), giving the impression of an anuṣṭubh verse (8 8 8 8) with a decorative flourish at the end. The principal dedicands of the hymn are the Ādityas, or rather the trio Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. These appear in scrambled order in verse 1cd, but for the rest of the upariṣṭādbṛhatī verses (2–7) occupy the entire second pāda in fixed order. This punctuation of each verse with two fixed phrases, each at the end of its hemistich, subordinates the message of each verse to its structure. Fortunately the message is elementary: the gods in question should lead us out of difficulties and to shelter and safety.

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2. For we choose that—o Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   by which you rescue a mortal from narrow straits and lead him—beyond
   hatreds.
3. They are here to aid us now—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   the best leaders in leading us and the best deliverers in delivering us—
   beyond hatreds.
4. You protect everyone all around—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman.
   May we be in the dear shelter of you, o you of good guidance—beyond
   hatreds.
5. The Ādityas (lead) beyond failures—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman.
   We would call on powerful Rudra along with the Maruts, on Indra and
   Agni, for well-being—beyond hatreds.

6. They are our leaders across—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   beyond all difficult passages—the kings of the settled domains—beyond
   hatreds.
7. Let them extend blessing to us to aid us—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   and broad shelter—the Ādityas, when we implore them—beyond hatreds.
8. Just as then you released the buffalo-cow bound by the foot, you good
   ones worthy of the sacrifice,
   so release constraint from us. (Let) our lifetime be further lengthened,
   o Agni.

X.127 (953) Night

Kuśika Saubhara or Rātri Bhāradvājī
8 verses: gāyatrī

In contrast to the numerous hymns dedicated to the lovely and welcome Dawn, Night is barely celebrated in the Ṛgveda, only in this one hymn. The night described here is not that of the frightening and formless darkness so often mentioned in the text, but rather starry night, who has beauties of her own. In fact, she is described in places (see vss. 2 and 3c especially) with phraseology more appropriate to Dawn, whose own advent is anticipated in verse 7.

1. Goddess Night, while coming hither, has looked about in many places
   with her eyes.
   She has laid on herself all beauties.
2. The immortal goddess has filled the broad (midspace), its depths and
   heights;
   with light she repels the darkness.
3. She has expelled her sister, Dawn—she, the goddess, while coming hither—
   and darkness will race away.
4. (Be) here for us today—you at whose journey we have settled down,
   like birds on their nest in the tree.
5. Down have settled the roving bands, down the footed, down the winged,
   down even the falcons in their busyness.
6. Keep away the she-wolf and the wolf; keep away the thief, o Night.
   But for us become easy to traverse.
7. Darkness, fully ornamented, black, smeared all over (with stars), has
   approached me.
   O Dawn, settle it like debts.
8. Right up to you have I driven (this hymn), like cows (to their pen).
   Choose it, o Daughter of Heaven,
   o Night—like a praise song for a victor.

X.128 (954) All Gods

Vihavya Āṅgirasa
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 9

Anxiety about rival sacrifices, a common preoccupation of the Ṛgveda, begins and informs this hymn. The first two verses situate the performance of the hymn "at the competing invocation(s)" (*vihavá*, a derivative of which provides the poet's name, Vihavya, in the Anukramaṇī)—a moment when sacrificers all over the Ārya lands are inviting the same gods to their own separate sacrifices. The poet urges his own case with a series of emphatic fronted 1st-person singular pronominal forms ("mine," "to me," etc.) in the first four verses. The potential competing sacrificers in these early verses are transformed into even more threatening figures as the hymn progress—haters (vs. 5), violent challengers in battle (vs. 6), rivals (vs. 9). The poet then asks for the aid of the gods in repulsing them and in protecting him.

The grammar and diction of the hymn are straightforward and spring no surprises.

1. Mine be the luster at the competing invocations, o Agni. Might we thrive in our body as we kindle you in your body.
   To me let the four quarters bow. With you as our overseer might we win battles.
2. Mine be all the gods at the competing invocation: the Maruts together with Indra, Viṣṇu, and Agni.
   Mine be the midspace, providing a broad place. For me, at my desire, let the wind purify itself [=blow].
3. To me let the gods bring material wealth through sacrifice. In me be the prayer; in me the invocation to the gods.
   The ancient divine Hotars acted with zeal. Might we be free from harm in our body and possessed of good heroes.
4. For me let them sacrifice (with) the oblations that are mine. Let the purpose of my mind come true.
   Let me not fall into any kind of offense. All you gods, speak for us!
5. You six broad goddesses, create broad (space) for us. All you gods, act as heroes here.
   May we not be bereft of offspring, nor of our own bodies. May we not become subject to him who hates us, o King Soma.
6. O Agni, repulsing the battle fury of the others [=the enemy], as an undeceivable herdsman, protect us on every side.
   Let the challengers bearing down turn back: at home their intention will disappear when they awaken.
7. He who is the Ordainer of Ordainers, the lord of creation—him, the god Rescuer, who vanquishes hostility (do I invoke).
   Let both the Aśvins and Bṛhaspati (protect) this sacrifice here; let the gods protect the sacrificer from failure.
8. The buffalo of broad expanse will offer shelter to us at this invocation—he who is invoked by many, who provides many cattle.
   Show mercy to our offspring, o you of the fallow bays. Do not harm us nor hand us over.
9. Whoever are our rivals, let them keep away: with Indra and Agni we will thrust them down.
   The Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas have made me one who touches on high, a formidable observer, an over-king.

X.129 (955) Creation

Prajāpati Parameṣṭhin
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This is one of the most famous hymns of the Ṛgveda, and one of the most significant for later Indian cosmogonies. Because it is elusive and suggestive rather than directly narrative, it has given rise to a wide variety of interpretations. The interpretation we offer here follows the more extensive discussion in Brereton (1999), which also refers to earlier literature and alternate interpretations.

If this is a cosmogonic hymn, it is certainly a strange one, because the last verse does not come to a conclusion but ends with a question. This incompleteness is formally marked by both metrical and syntactic irregularities. The meter of verse 7b is two syllables short, leaving the its hearers to anticipate two beats that are not there, and the syntax of 7d is incomplete since the poem ends with a relative clause without a main clause. A close look at the rest of the hymn explains the reason for these poetic strategies.

In verse 1 there is a progression from negations—what existed was neither existing nor nonexisting and neither space nor heaven existed—to questions (1c) to possibilities (1d). Verse 2 also begins with negation, here the negation of death, deathlessness, and the signs of night and day. The only narrative progress is the greater specificity in verse 2 about what is negated: there are no mortals or immortals, there is no moon or sun. But whereas 1cd continued with questions and possibilities, 2cd provides an answer to the question of what existed: there existed "that One," which "breathed without wind." In 1c the poet asked what "stirred," or more literally what "moved back and forth," and in 2c the implicit answer is that the "breathing" of the One moves back and forth. If 2c answers the question of 1c and indeed if verse 2 defines what verse 1 suggests, then "that One" in verse 2 is the previously undefined thing that was neither existent nor nonexistent in verse 1.

Verse 3 sharpens the sense that nothing is happening, nothing material at least. It apparently starts over once again: 3a ends "in the beginning" (*ágre*) just as 1a ends

"at that time" (*tadā́nīm*) and 2a "then" (*tárhi*). But where verses 1 and 2 asked questions or only hinted at answers, 3a asserts that there was something, namely "darkness" covered by darkness, and 3c describes a "thing coming into being" (*ābhú*) covered by "emptiness." In verse 3, therefore, "that One" still does not have substance, but it is beginning to have shape, since there is something that is "covered" by something. As Thieme (1964: 66–67) has observed, that shape is the shape of an egg, and it is this egg-like shape that in 3d "was born" or hatched through heat.

Thus far there has been little development of substance, although there has been an evolution of concept. An unidentified subject that neither exists nor does not exist is introduced in verse 1. It has taken conceptual form as the "One" in verse 2, and finally assumed an egg-like shape in verse 3. In verse 4 there is a shift that apparently breaks the continuity of the hymn. According to 4ab, thought gives rise to desire, which is concretized as the "primal semen," the origin of beings. However, there is one thing that connects verses 3 and 4 and maintains the hymn's continuity: "desire" in 4a corresponds to "heat" in 3d. If so, then "thought" in 4b should correspond to the "One" in 3d. And so it does, for "thought" is the hidden metaphor in verses 1–3. In verse 1 it is thought that neither exists nor does not exist, because thought is something real but at the same time something not real, since it is not externally perceptible. Or, to put it another way, thought has shape but no substance, as verse 3 says. This hymn, therefore, shows an omphalos structure, in which the middle verse, in this case verse 4, contains the key to the hymn. Here that key is the revelation that thought is the One, which is the ultimate source of creation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the "connection" (*bándhu*) between "existing" and "not-existing," the connection that is thought, was discovered by poets "though inspired thinking" (*manīṣā́*, 4d). In verse 5 this "connection" also becomes a dividing "cord" (*raśmí*) and through it there emerges the distinction between males (the placers of semen and the offering) and females ("greatnesses," i.e., pregnancies, and independent will).

But even if thought is the ultimate and primal creative act, the origin of the world is still unknown, even by the gods (vs. 6c). If there is an overseer of the world, he might know, or he might not (vs. 7cd). The lack of an answer means that "thinking" will not come to an end. The poem ends with metrical and syntactic irresolution and with a question in order that its hearers are left thinking and in that way left repeating the fundamental act of creation, the act of thinking.

1. The nonexistent did not exist, nor did the existent exist at that time.
   There existed neither the airy space nor heaven beyond.
   What moved back and forth? From where and in whose protection? Did water exist, a deep depth?
2. Death did not exist nor deathlessness then. There existed no sign of night nor of day.
   That One breathed without wind by its independent will. There existed nothing else beyond that.
3. Darkness existed, hidden by darkness, in the beginning. All this was a signless ocean.
   What existed as a thing coming into being, concealed by emptiness—that One was born by the power of heat.
4. Then, in the beginning, from thought there evolved desire, which existed as the primal semen.
   Searching in their hearts through inspired thought, poets found the connection of the existent in the nonexistent.
5. Their cord was stretched across: Did something exist below it? Did something exist above?
   There existed placers of semen and there existed greatnesses. There was independent will below, offering above.
6. Who really knows? Who shall here proclaim it?—from where was it born, from where this creation?
   The gods are on this side of the creation of this (world). So then who does know from where it came to be?
7. This creation—from where it came to be, if it was produced or if not—he who is the overseer of this (world) in the furthest heaven, he surely knows. Or if he does not know . . . ?

X.130 (956) Creation of the Sacrifice

Yajña Prājāpatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1

In its first three verses the hymn depicts the creation of the acts of the sacrifice through the image of weaving. The form of the sacrifice was instituted by the gods (vss. 1, 3) and first carried out by the "fathers," the ancient seers who were the ancestors of the current priests (vs. 6). Indeed, these fathers are at the present rite as well (1cd). In verse 2 it becomes complicated because it is difficult to know who the actors are. In 2ab the subject may not be "a man," but "the Man," a figure similar to the Puruṣa of X.90. That is how Sāyaṇa and others have understood it. But it might also refer simply to "a man" in the sense of "a human" and imply that humans have taken up the weaving of the gods and ancestors, and in doing so their activity reaches to heaven. Again in 2cd it is not clear who "they" are who have sat down to weave the sacrifice. They might be the fathers after 1cd, the human priests in continuation of 2ab, or the gods in anticipation of verse 3. Since any of these could have been so described, the ambiguity may be intentional.

Verse 3ab completes the weaving image, although the terminology reflects the ritual as much as it does weaving. The "model" and "image" could be for a woven cloth or a ritual performance. The *nidā́na*, a "connection" or a "rope," might fit weaving but does not fit the ritual very well. Since according to X.114.2 poets are

able to see the hidden "connection," in a ritual context it may describe knowledge that a priest has. On the other hand "melted butter" and a "frame" could find a place in either weaving or ritual. In 3cd the imagery is all from the sacrifice. In 3c the poet mentions the Praügaśastra, which is the second recitation of the Morning Pressing in the classical Agniṣṭoma. The recitation comprises I.2–3, which names the deities who receive soma in the three pressings in an Agniṣṭoma, and may have been singled out because of that. The last line could also be translated "when all the gods sacrificed to the god," but we have understood it as an echo of 6d and X.90.16a (=I.164.50a) *yajñéna yajñám ayajanta devā́ḥ* "with the sacrifice the gods offered the sacrifice."

The ritual frame described in verses 1–3 is then filled with gods in verses 4–5, verses that link the various meters of Vedic poetry with the major gods of the sacrificial day. There are various associations between a particular meter and a particular god: The sacrificial fire, Agni, begins the sacrificial day, and the gāyatrī meter is associated with the morning soma-pressing. The name of the bṛhatī-meter is similar to the name of Bṛhaspati, and Indra hymns are characteristically composed in the triṣṭubh meter. And, balancing Agni and the gāyatrī, the All Gods and the jagatī meter are associated with the evening soma-pressing.

The last two verses recall the ancient sages who ordered the sacrifice and affirm that the priests today follow the path that has been set for them. As Geldner notes, the "courses (of the ritual)" refer to the actions of the ritual to which the recitations are attached.

1. The sacrifice, which is extended in every direction by its warp threads and stretched out by a hundred and one acts of the gods—
   these fathers who have traveled here weave that. They sit at the warp, saying, "Weave forth, weave back."
2. A man extends it [=the warp] and pulls it up (with the heddles); a man has extended it out upon the vault of heaven here.
   Here are their pegs; they [=the gods?] sat down upon their seat and made the sāman-chants the shuttles for weaving.
3. What was its model, its image? What its connection? What was its melted butter? What was its frame?
   What was the meter? What was the Praüga-recitation, what the hymn?—when all the gods offered the god [=the Sacrifice].
4. The gāyatrī meter became the yokemate of Agni. Savitar has united with the uṣṇihā meter
   and Soma with the anuṣṭubh meter, gaining greatness through the hymns. The bṛhatī meter helped the speech of Bṛhaspati.
5. The virāj meter is the full glory of Mitra and Varuṇa, and the triṣṭubh meter is here Indra's portion of the (sacrificial) day.
   The jagatī meter entered the All Gods. According to this did the seers, the sons of Manu, arrange (the ritual).

6. The seers, the sons of Manu, our fathers, arranged (the ritual) according to this, when the sacrifice was born in ancient times.
   Seeing with my mind as my eye, I think of the ancient ones who offered this sacrifice.
7. The courses (of the ritual were) joined with the praise songs, joined with the meters. The heavenly Seven Seers were joined with the model (of the rite).
   Looking along the path of the ancients, the insightful ones [=the present priests] have taken hold of the reins (of the sacrifice) like charioteers.

X.131 (957) Indra (1–3, 6–7), Aśvins (4–5)

Sukīrti Kākṣīvata
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 4

The Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to a descendant of Kakṣīvant, the clever wordsmith of I.116–26, and, although the poem is framed by conventional prayers for help to Indra (vss. 1, 6–7), there is more than a flash of Kakṣīvant's brilliance in the intermediate verses, especially 2–3. Moreover, almost half of Kakṣīvant's output consists of Aśvin hymns (I.116–120), indeed, more than half by verse count, and verses 4–5 of our hymn allude to a myth not otherwise found in the Ṛgveda but prevalent in later Vedic, in which the Aśvins figure prominently.

Verses 2 and 3 have a slightly folksy air, using homely images to provide a model for Indra's behavior toward us. In verse 2 the model is the harvesting and threshing of grain; if our interpretation is correct, the poet compares the threshing of the grain, which gets rid of the chaff and keeps only the wholesome grain, to decisions Indra should make about how to distribute goods he has acquired. The goods should come only to us [=the good grain], not to those [=the chaff] who neglect their sacrificial tasks. This image has the type of twist that Kakṣīvant enjoys: the audience thinks at first that the grain is being compared to the "goodies" to be distributed, and when that interpretation doesn't work, they must dig deeper to redistribute the metaphorical roles.

Verse 3 is not as conceptually complex, but it displays a virtuosic density. The first pāda contains the entire metaphorical model: a one-horse vehicle won't succeed, or in an expanded and more literal paraphrase, "there is nothing that, when drawn by a single animal, has traveled in the right way." The implications are then worked out: pāda b suggests that relying on oneself alone will not bring fame; the last half of the verse provides the solution: seek Indra as helper and yokemate.

This message, that everyone needs a helper, is then projected onto the mythological plane, indeed onto the greatest hero—often presented as acting triumphantly alone—Indra. The little snatch of the Aśvin story found in verses 4–5 emphasizes how they and Sarasvatī "helped" Indra in his need. This myth has been much

discussed in the literature (see especially Bloomfield [1893] and Oldenberg [1893], as well as Jamison [1991: 98–103]), especially in its relationship to the later Sautrāmaṇī ritual, which in fact utilizes some of the verses in this hymn and which owes its name to the epithet of Indra found in verses 6–7, *sutrā́man* "of good protection." We will not pursue the issue in detail here. In brief summary, Indra became sick after drinking an excess of soma, and in order to heal him the Aśvins and Sarasvatī had him drink the usually forbidden alcohol surā, which they obtained in one way or another (the methods are different at different periods in Vedic) from the asuric Namuci. The surā was not pure but mixed, and both the Aśvins and Indra are here depicted as performing the singular feat of separating the two mixed liquids in the course of drinking them.

If even Indra occasionally needs helpers, we need feel no shame in seeking one ourselves, and in the last two verses (6–7) we express the hope that Indra will fill this role for us.

1. O overpowering Indra, thrust away all the eastern foes, away the western ones,
   away the northern ones, o champion, and away the southern ones, so that we might rejoice in your broad shelter.
2. Surely it is like barley-growers and their barley—how they cut it, threshing it according to the old ways—
   (so), here, just here (with us [=grain]) put the goodies of those [=chaff] who have not come for the reverent twisting of the sacred grass.
3. Because a "one-horse" carriage doesn't drive well, so fame has never been acquired (thus) at the encounters.
   Inspired ones, seeking cows, seeking horses, seeking prizes, (seek) the bull Indra for partnership.
4. O Aśvins, having separated the surā-soma by drinking it in company with the asuric Namuci,
   you helped Indra in his deeds, o lords of beauty.
5. Like parents their son, both the Aśvins helped (you), Indra, through their wondrous skills and sage words.
   When with your powers you separated the surā-soma by drinking it, Sarasvatī healed you, bounteous one.
6. Let Indra be of good protection, of good help with his help, very gracious, affording all possessions.
   Let him thrust away hatred; let him create fearlessness. Might we be lords of good heroes in abundance.
7. May we be in the favor of him who deserves the sacrifice, in his propitious benevolence.
   Let Indra of good protection, of good help to us keep hatred away even from a distance.

X.132 (958) Mitra and Varuṇa

Śākapūta Nārmedha
7 verses: nyaṅkusāriṇī 1, prastārapaṅkti 2, 6, virāḍrūpā 3–5, mahāsatobṛhatī 7

This metrically messy hymn is, one must say, a mess in every other way as well. Given the serious disturbances in the meter, it is quite possible that many of the problems in the hymn result from faulty transmission, but we must translate what we have, not what we wish we had. At this point it is impossible to produce a satisfying account of the purport of the whole hymn and of its many puzzles of detail, but it is also not possible to supply even a tentative translation without having a prior hypothesis about the underlying aim of the composition. Geldner suggests that a specific political story lies behind it, full of sin, murder, and regal intrigue, but his sketch of this scenario is not convincing.

Our own hypothesis is less dramatic, though perhaps equally unconvincing. We believe that it reflects the ritual innovation happening during this late Ṛgvedic period that split the earlier role(s) of sacrificing priest-poet into what in classical śrauta ritual are the "Sacrificer" (Yajamāna, lit. "the one sacrificing for himself"), who actually has little active participation in the sacrifice but provides the material support for it, and the working priests who are the actual physical and verbal performers of sacrifice. The new "Sacrificer" in part takes over the old role of "patron" (*sūrí*), but maintains a more organic connection to the sacrifice. In this hymn this new type of Sacrificer is celebrated, as is his largesse to us, the working priests. Divine models for this split role with complementary duties are provided in the hymn—primarily by Mitra and Varuṇa, the ostensible dedicands, but also by Heaven and Earth (vss. 1 and 6, with Heaven also paired with Varuṇa in vs. 4) and the Aśvins (vs. 1).

Perhaps the best support for our views is the first verse, which contains three fronted repetitions of the perfect middle participle *ījāná* "having performed sacrifice for himself," the perfect-stem equivalent of the present middle participle *yájamāna* "sacrificing for himself" that is substantivized to become the title Sacrificer. This figure is the object of the ministrations of both Heaven and Earth (ab) and the Aśvins (cd). The first half of verse 2 contrastively introduces "us," the priests who are sacrificing (in the active voice, *yajāmasi*) at the prompting, presumably, of the Sacrificer, who appears in the second half of the verse, in the guise of another middle participle, *krāṇá* "performing (ritual) for himself." Mitra and Varuṇa bestow their favors on both parties and assure their joint victory over demonic forces.

Verse 3 is particularly challenging and has received numerous clashing interpretations, but we believe that it continues the theme of complementary roles and in fact introduces the motif of the Sacrificer's gifts to the priests. In our view "we," in our priestly role, are seeking to attract Mitra and Varuṇa to the sacrifice (pāda a), while the Sacrificer is represented as the giver in pāda c, with pāda d expressing the hope or expectation that no one can disrupt his gifts to us. Complicating

the interpretation is the rare and rather charged word *réknas* "legacy." However, *réknas* is several times used of what we gain from the gods at the sacrifice (e.g., I.31.5, 121.5, VI.20.7); in keeping with its etymology (from the root *ric* "leave"), it can be viewed as what was "left behind" by the gods at the sacrifice, and both the priests and the Sacrificer should receive it, as they both seem to in pādas b and c respectively.

Serious impediments to our (or anyone else's) interpretation arise in the following verses, especially the second half of verse 4 through the first half of verse 5. The first half of verse 5, in a twist on the classic "the one... the other" (*anyá... anyá*) construction typically used to depict the complementary functions of two individuals, posits the shared or successive kingship of Heaven and Varuṇa. In pāda 4c Varuṇa, addressed in the 2nd person, or Varuṇa or someone else, presented in the 3rd person (the verb is ambiguous), "takes pleasure in the chariot." The chariot could be the chariot of the sacrifice, found also in verse 7b, or the war chariot. The latter seems more likely in the context of the next pāda and the first hemistich of verse 5 and gains resonance from other features of the god Varuṇa. Pāda 5d states that "It is not by such a transgression that (a man) is (called) 'oath-breaker'" (following the reading *āntakadhrúk* of Eichner-Kühn [1982], who connected it to the seṭ root *am* "pledge, swear," rather than the previously standard interpretation *antaka*). What transgression? If it is what is found in the previous pāda, taking pleasure in the chariot, it might be a very oblique reference to Varuṇa's standard functions. It is well known that Varuṇa and Indra often share kingship (see the famous dialogue hymn IV.42), with Indra functioning as king in times of war, Varuṇa in times of peace. If Varuṇa is taking pleasure in the war chariot, his behavior is uncharacteristic and could indeed be considered transgressive, but, the poet tells us, it would not be sufficiently serious to constitute a breach of his normal duties, would not be an oath-breaking infraction. His unaccustomed behavior points to the theme of the hymn, by implication: each member of a pair has his own sphere and venturing out of that sphere may invite suspicion or even blame. (Alternatively, if the subject of pāda c is an unidentified third person, the pleasure that person/god takes in the war-chariot would not brand him as one who has violated his oath to Varuṇa.)

What *would* be a sufficient transgression is laid out in 5ab and attributed to an individual derogatorily named "Shit-purified" (*Śakapūta*)—namely, treacherously continuing to attack fallen warriors after a peace-treaty has been concluded. Even if our speculations about the meaning of 4cd–5ab are correct (and there are alternative interpretations; for example that 4ab refers to the passing of power from Father Sky [Dyaus Pitar] to gods such as Varuṇa and Indra possibly depicted in X.124), it is difficult to understand why this bitter little anecdote was inserted into the hymn at this point and just as quickly dropped. Note, by the way, that the Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to Śakapūta, but it is almost certainly the case that this name was simply plucked from the hymn itself. The Anukramaṇī's patronymic Nārmedha has a better chance of conforming to fact, as the name Nṛmedha is found in the final verse, where poets typically name themselves, and a Nṛmedha Āngirasa is the supposed poet of several other hymns (VIII.89–90, 98–99; IX.27, 29; VIII.90 shows some parallels to our hymn).

The rest of verse 5 and all of verse 6 appear to concern the present sacrifice, where the pair Mitra and Varuṇa are to be found, as well as Heaven and Earth (in a simile)—in addition to Agni and Aditi, for good measure. Again, there are a number of difficulties in the details. The first half of the final verse (7) also takes place at the sacrifice, and it seems to reaffirm the split roles of Sacrificer and priest that we claim provide the subject for the hymn. The "two ruling over property" in pāda a are, of course, Mitra and Varuṇa, but they also represent the Sacrificer-patron figure, while the unnamed subject of pāda b is the actual priestly officiant who will direct the chariot of the sacrifice.

We would be perfectly happy if the hymn had ended with 7b, for the last hemistich presents yet another unsolvable challenge. As noted above, the poet (if that's who it is) Nṛmedha names himself in this half-verse, also under the punning designation Sumedha. But the nature of the exploit he boasts of—the rescue of a certain set of females (or feminine-gender items)—must remain opaque, because the word characterizing the rescued is an impossible hapax, a plural present participle to an apparent denominative verb meaning "seek/behave as/perform *kaṇūka*," a word with no etymology or apparent relatives. Following Sāyaṇa, most modern translators render it as "lamenting," but this was clearly a desperate, though contextually plausible, guess on the part of Sāyaṇa, and it seems better to leave the poet's punning wordplay or contemporary reference untranslated.

1. The man who has sacrificed for himself—Heaven with its welcomed goods (is occupied in tending) just to him; Earth is (occupied in) tending to him who has sacrificed for himself.
   The two gods, the Aśvins, with their favors have strengthened him who has sacrificed for himself.
2. By reason of the (ritual) prompt we sacrifice to you two, o Mitra and Varuṇa, who uphold the communities and offer good favors.
   By your comradeship for the man who performs (ritual) for himself might we prevail over demons.
3. And even now, when we seek to establish you two here, while coming into possession of our own dear legacy,
   or when the giver prospers with regard to his legacy, no one shall bring his bounties (for us) into collision [=destroy them].
4. The one, yonder Heaven, was consecrated (as king), but (the other, namely) you, lord Varuṇa, are (now) king of all.
   As head (of all), you take pleasure in the chariot [=war chariot? chariot of the sacrifice?]. It is not by such a transgression that (a man) is (called) "oath-breaker,"

5. But on this (man), on "shit-purified" Śakapūta, is this transgression: even
   though a (peace) alliance was concluded, he keeps smiting the heroes
   who have gone down.
   When the charger [=Agni?] has placed the help of *you two in his own
   dear bodies worthy of the sacrifice—
6. Because, o discerning ones, Aditi, the mother of you two is, like Heaven
   and Earth, (occupied) in purifying with her milk—
   (all of you,) allot things dear (to us); wash (us) with the rays of the sun.
7. Because you two who rule over property have taken your seats, he [=the
   priest?] has mounted, like a chariot, the one [=sacrificial fire] sitting at
   the chariot-pole (of the sacrifice), sitting on the wood.
   Those females of ours, seeking [/behaving like] *kaṇūka* [?], has Nṛmedha
   rescued from narrow straits, has "very wise" Sumedha rescued from
   narrow straits.

X.133 (959) Indra

Sudās Paijavana
7 verses: śakvarī 1–3, mahāpaṅkti 4–6, triṣṭubh 7

The most salient feature of this hymn is the refrain of the first six verses, "let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows," an elaboration on the Nābhāka Kāṇva refrain of VIII.39–42 "let all the other squirts burst," though there is no apparent connection between the two poets. Our hymn is attributed to Sudās Paijavana; Sudās is the name of the leading king in the Battle of the Ten Kings, on whose side Indra fought, and it is perhaps not an accident that the first three verses in this hymn are in a form of śakvarī meter (here seven pādas of eight syllables). In VII.33.4 "a lofty cry in śakvarī" is what attracted Indra to fight on the side of Sudās in this battle. It is meter that also provides the possible connection with the Nābhāka Kāṇva hymns just mentioned: the rare śakvarī meter is also found in VIII.40.2, and the likewise rather rare mahāpaṅkti meter (six pādas of eight syllables) of the second three verses of our hymn (4–6) is also the meter of the Nābhāka hymns VIII.39, VIII.40 (save for vss. 2 and 12), and VIII.41.

The hymn celebrates the martial deeds and powers of Indra and urges the god to use his powers against our enemies, both within and without.

1. Chant forth to him a leading chariot (of a hymn), a fortifying (hymn)
   to Indra.
   As a maker of wide space even in close quarters, a Vṛtra-smiter in
   combat and conflicts, become our inciter.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
2. You sent the rivers surging downward; you smashed the serpent.

   You were born without a rival, Indra; you foster everything of value. We
   embrace you.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
3. All the hostilities of the stranger will disappear, while our poetic insights
   will reach beyond (those) of the stranger.
   You are wont to shoot the murderous weapon at the rival who wishes to
   smite us, Indra. Your generosity—(that is just) giving goods.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
4. Indra, the folk all about who, acting the wolf, will set their sights on us,
   set them beneath our feet. You are an overpowering oppressor.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
5. Indra, whoever of the same lineage assails us and whoever outside the pale—
   bring his power low. (You are) like great Heaven in your own person.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
6. We, seeking you, seize hold of your companionship, Indra.
   Lead us along the path of truth, across all difficult passages.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
7. O Indra, for us exert your power over her who will milk out a choice
   thing for the singer—
   so that the great cow with unsplit udder will swell with milk for us, in a
   thousand streams.

X.134 (960) Indra

Māndhātar Yauvanāśva (1–6a), Godhā (6b–7)
7 verses: mahāpaṅkti, except paṅkti 7

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns X.133 and X.134 to different poets, they seem to be companion pieces. The latter hymn shares its meter, mahāpaṅkti, with the second triplet (vss. 4–6) of X.133; both hymns are dedicated to Indra and share phraseology (e.g., 133.4bc and 134.2cd); and 134 also has a refrain in its first six verses, though one without the slangy sassiness of 133.1–6.

Like the last hymn, this one asks Indra for help against our enemies and also for bounties. These are of course standard requests, but the imagery toward the end of the hymn (vss. 5–6) is both precise and quirky, particularly the picture of Indra using his ability like a long crook to pull down a high branch and shake down its fruit, an image in turn compared to a goat doing the same with his forefoot. (Anyone familiar with goat behavior will recognize this picture instantly.)

1. When, Indra, you filled the two world-halves, as Dawn does,
   as the great sovereign king of the great domains
   did the goddess Begetter beget you, did the auspicious Begetter
   beget you.

2. Make slack the taut (bow) of the evilly angry mortal.
   Set him beneath our feet—whoever will set his sights on us.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
3. Shake down these lofty all-glittering refreshments, you foe-smiter,
   through your abilities, able Indra, along with all your forms of help.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
4. Since you shake down all these, o Indra of a hundred resolves,
   like wealth for the presser, together with thousandfold forms of help,
   the goddess Begetter begot (you), the auspicious Begetter begot (you).
5. Like beads of sweat let the missiles fly down, scattered all around
   like blades of dūrvā grass. Let malevolence go away from us.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
6. Because you carry your ability like a long crook, you rich in counsel,
   you will hold (it) as a goat (does) a branch with its forefoot,
   bounteous one.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
7. O gods, never do we confound, never do we efface (them):
   we practice obedience to your solemn utterances.
   We grab onto (you) here by the sides, by the shoulders.

X.135 (961) Yama

Kumāra Yāmāyana
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

Both baffling and deeply engrossing, this hymn has given rise to a multitude of interpretations, none of which produces a completely satisfactory reading. Without discussing previous interpretations in detail, we will add our own, with no expectation that it will meet with any more acceptance than those that preceded it.

It is generally (but not universally) agreed that it concerns a death, either that of a boy or that of his father, and the journey to (or from) the realm of Yama, the ruler of the dead (see, e.g., X.14). Both a boy (*kumārá*, vss. 3–5) and a father (vs. 1) are explicitly mentioned in the hymn, and we follow those who consider the dead man to be the father. The pleasant place over which Yama has domain is described in the first and last (7) verses; in the first verse the dead person is traveling there, while in the last he seems to have reached it successfully.

The first two verses appear to be spoken by the boy whose father has just died. He imagines his father's journey to Yama (vs. 1), and in verse 2 he displays a psychologically plausible ambivalence: he longs to see his father again, but recoils from even the thought of following him on his road to the realm of the dead. The solution to his psychological dilemma seems to be given in verses 3–4: the boy creates

a mental chariot without wheels that he mounts without seeing it, and presumably this vehicle carries him to his father without the rigors of the journey. To us this mental conveyance suggests a dream, and many of us have experienced such reunions with the beloved dead in dreams. But the chariot can also be (and in vs. 4 more likely is) the ritual, quite possibly the correctly performed funeral service for his father.

The real problems in this hymn are found in verses 5–6 and in particular the word *anudéyī*, found in both verses (5d, 6a) in identical phrases. Although the word is a transparent gerundive, in the feminine, formed to the lexeme *ánu-√dā* "hand over, concede" and should therefore mean "to be handed over, conceded," its exact usage is completely unclear. Its only other occurrence is in the wedding hymn (X.85.6), where it appears to refer to a bridesmaid or female servant of the bride, who is to accompany her to her new home. Interpretations of the word in this hymn vary wildly, an indication of the problems it poses: Grassmann "Braut" (bride); Geldner "Amme" (nurse); Renou "viatique" (provisions for a journey; *EVP*), but "chargement" (cargo; *Hymnes spéculatives* [1956]); Oldenberg (following Caland) "Anustaraṇīkuh" (cow to be killed at the funeral rite); Griffith "funeral gift"; Macdonell "equipment"; Doniger O'Flaherty "gift for the journey." Our own interpretation is informed by the use of the lexeme *ánu-√dā* in an Atharvaveda passage (AVŚ VI.118.1–2), a passage found in various versions also in the Paippalāda recension of the Atharvaveda, in the Maitrāyaṇa Saṃhitā, and in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. In this passage the speaker asks for his offenses, his debts (*ṛṇá*), to be forgiven, using the verb *ánu-dā* (vs. 1: "let the two Apsarases forgive this *ṛṇá* of ours today"), and he seeks for this to happen before he enters "Yama's world." The part of the passage concerning Yama's world is read variously in the various texts and has clearly been subject to corruption, but in most readings the person in question fears entering Yama's world "with a rope on" (*ádhirajju*), a rope presumably imposed by his debts.

Reading our passage with these passages in mind, we may speculate that verses 5 and 6 find the father arriving at Yama's world with the same anxiety apparent in the passages just referred to: that he will be called to account for the debts he owes and must prove that they have been repaid or forgiven (*ánu-√dā*) before he enters that realm. The Taittirīya Saṃhitā (VI.3.10.5) already knows the three debts (also *ṛṇá*) with which a brahmin is born: studentship to the ṛṣis, sacrifice to the gods, and sons for his ancestors. Although we see no trace of studentship in this hymn, the two questions in the first half of verse 5 provide implicit answers about the other two debts: the dead man begat a son, and he (and/or the son) also sent forth the chariot of sacrifice. Satisfactory answers about these debts clear the way for the father to enter Yama's realm in verse 6, and it may in fact be Yama who is asking the questions.

Several questions remain, however. Since *ṛṇá* "debt" is a neuter noun, why is *ánudeyī* feminine in gender? There are no obvious feminine referents in this hymn that could underlie this adjective. For this problem the Atharvaveda passage

provides a clue. As was noted above, the protagonist in that passage fears entering Yama's world "with a rope on," with the rope representing his unpaid debts. The word *rájju* "rope" is feminine, and we suggest that this symbolic representation is the referent of *ánudeyī*. A more literal rendering than that given in the translation below would be "(the rope/fetter of debt) to be forgiven."

Even in this interpretation verse 6 remains somewhat puzzling, though the overall impression made by the last three pādas is that of the enlargement of space. Here the clue is found in the final pāda, in the word *nirāyaṇam* "coming forth." The lexeme *nír-√i* (and closely related *nír-á-√i*) is almost entirely confined in the Ṛgveda to birth contexts, to "coming forth" from the womb or a womblike container. In X.60.7 it is used not of an original birth, but of a symbolic rebirth, recalling a sick man to life. We suggest that here, too, a rebirth is at issue, but this time it is the rebirth into a happy life in Yama's world, where the dead man will be reunited with his body and partake of the pleasures hinted at in verses 1 and 7, as well as in, for example, X.14 (esp. vss. 7–9). The reuniting with the body after death in a distant realm is treated at length in X.56, where it is also likened to birth (X.56.1). The rebirth in our verse is somewhat graphically depicted, with the top (the head of the infant) coming out first, then the rest of his body, until the coming forth is completed. (Or, alternatively, the *nirayaṇam* may actually refer to the afterbirth.)

The last verse announces the dead and now reborn man's arrival at Yama's delightful seat, with the emphatic annunciatory pronouns *idám* (7a), *iyám* (7c), *ayám* (7d), all meaning "here is, this one right here." The promise of verse 1 has finally been fulfilled.

For a detailed presentation of this interpretation of X.135, see Jamison (forthcoming d).

1. [Boy:] The leafy tree where Yama holds symposium with the gods,
   toward there the clanlord, our father, follows the track of the ancient ones.
2. [Boy:] Him following the track of the ancient ones, wandering along yonder evil way,
   did I keep looking for reluctantly, but I was longing for him again.
3. [Father?:] The new chariot without wheels that you made with your mind, lad,
   the one that has a single shaft but faces in all directions—without seeing it, you mount it.
4. [Father?:] The chariot which you, lad, sent rolling forth from the inspired poets,
   following it the sāman melody rolled forth from here, set onto a boat.
5. [Yama? Poet?:] Who begat the lad? Who sent the chariot rolling out?
   Who could tell us this today, how the (debt) came to be forgiven?
6. As (the debt) came to be forgiven, after that the top was born;
   the base was stretched out in front and the "coming forth" was made behind.
7. Here is the seat of Yama, which is called the palace of the gods.
   Here is his pipe blown; here is he adorned with hymns.

X.136 (962) Muni [the Keśins "Long-Haired Ones"]

Vātaraśana's seven sons, the munis Jūti 1, Vātajūti 2, Viprajūti 3, Vṛṣāṇaka 4, Karikrata 5, Etaśa 6, Ṛśyaśṛṅga 7
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

This short hymn about the long-haired (*keśin*) ascetic (*muni*) has gained a certain measure of fame as an apparent precursor of later extreme ascetic practices and of the Rudra-Śiva cult (based especially on the mention of Rudra in the last verse, where the ascetic drinks an apparent cultic substance in company with Rudra). From the Ṛgvedic point of view its closest analogue is the Labasūkta (X.119), describing the sensations of a soma-drinker, with its refrain "Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!" Both hymns depict the experience as flight, especially flight sped by the wind (here see vss. 2–6) and affording a bird's eye view of the earth and its inhabitants (here vs. 4–5), and also emphasize the subject's sense of power over cosmic entities (here esp. vss. 1, 5).

The difference seems to be the identity of the drink that produces these sensations: soma in I.119, "poison" (*viṣá*) in this hymn. The mention of the latter substance begins and ends this hymn (vss. 1a, 7c) in ring composition. It is unclear what the liquid in question is. However, it should be noted that the drinker himself/itself is provided with characteristic somian vocabulary ("sweet, most exhilarating") in the last pāda (6d) before the final verse depicting the preparation and drinking of the poison, and furthermore that the preparation of this poison by churning/stirring (*√manth*) and crushing (*√piṣ*) seems to mimic the preparation of soma: "crush" is semantically close to "press" (*√su*), and a certain type of soma, mixed with meal, is technically called *manthín*. The prominence of the wind-god Vāyu (vss. 5, 7) is also reminiscent of the soma sacrifice, for Vāyu, along with Indra, is the first recipient of the soma drink. Thus, the cultic practice here is either being presented as a mirror-image analogue of the orthodox soma sacrifice, or in fact *is* the soma sacrifice, but in esoteric guise.

1. The long-haired one bears fire, the long-haired one poison, the long-haired one the two world-halves.
   The long-haired one (bears) the sun for all to see. The long-haired one is called this light here.
2. The wind-girt ascetics wear tawny rags.
   They follow the swooping of the wind when the gods have entered (them).
3. "Roused up to ecstasy by our asceticism, we have mounted the winds.
   You mortals see only our bodies."

4. He flies through the midspace, gazing down on all forms.
   The ascetic has been established as the comrade of every god for good action.
5. The horse of the wind, the comrade of Vāyu—so sped by (that) god, the ascetic
   presides over both seas, the eastern and the western.
6. Ranging in the range of the Apsarases and the Gandharvas, of the wild birds,
   the long-haired one is their sweet, most exhilarating comrade, who knows their will.
7. Vāyu churned it for him; Kunannamā kept crushing it,
   when the long-haired one drank of the poison with his cup, together with Rudra.

X.137 (963) All Gods

Bharadvāja 1, Kaśyapa 2, Gotama 3, Atri 4, Viśvāmitra 5, Jamadagni 6, Vasiṣṭha 7
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

The Anukramaṇī attributes these seven verses to seven different authors, and it is a distinguished group of poets indeed: the same foundational ṛṣis in the same order as in IX.67, a hymn that seems intended to bring together the separate poetic lineages into a unified pan-Ārya assemblage for political purposes.

It is difficult to discern such a grand design in this hymn, which, moreover, shows no signs of composite nature. Six of the seven verses (all but vs. 6) are found together in single hymns in both the Śaunaka and the Paippalāda recensions of the Atharvaveda (IV.13 and V.18 respectively), and the contents form a unity. Not surprisingly, given its Atharvaveda parallels, it is a simple Atharvan healing spell, calling on the gods, the wind, and the waters to bring a remedy for the disease afflicting the object of the spell. The poet-officiant is the actual effector of the healing, however, and in the last verse of the hymn (7; see also vs. 4) he deploys both his hands and his voice to bring about the cure—the usual pairing of action and speech characteristic of Atharvan practice.

1. O gods, the one who has been put down, o gods, you lead him up again.
   and, o gods, the one who has committed an offense, o gods, you make him live again.
2. These two winds blow from the river to the far distance.
   Let the one blow skill here for you; let the other blow far away what is malady.
3. O Wind, blow healing here; o Wind, blow away what is malady,
   for you, possessing all healing, speed as the messenger of the gods.

4. I have come to you with beneficial things, and also with noninjurious things.
   I have brought auspicious skill for you; I drive your disease far away.
5. Let the gods bring rescue here; let the troop of Maruts bring rescue;
   let all beings bring rescue, so that this one here will be without malady.
6. These very waters are truly remedies; the waters banish affliction.
   The waters are remedies for everything. Let them create a remedy for you.
7. With two hands with their ten branches—my tongue is the lead-cow of speech —
   with the two that free you from affliction, with these two, we touch you.

X.138 (964) Indra

Aṅga Aurava
6 verses: jagatī

This short hymn celebrating a number of Indra's great deeds is surprisingly obscure. It begins without much difficulty, with two verses devoted to the opening of the Vala cave, though even here there are some puzzles. The second verse ends with the triumphant appearance of the sun after the cave is opened.

This appearance seems to set the theme for the remaining verses of the hymn: though these four verses treat several different deeds of Indra (the destruction of Pipru's fortresses in vss. 3–4, the Vṛtra smashing in at least part of vs. 5), they share a preoccupation with what we might call the deregulation of cosmic time and Indra's participation in and repair of these problems. In 3a the Sun "unhitched his chariot in the middle of heaven," an image that seems to suggest that the normal daily progress of the sun through the sky stopped abruptly and time stood still. This may, or may not, be a version of Indra's stealing the wheel of the Sun (see, e.g., V.29, 31; IV.30.4–5). Two factors favor the identification of the two mythic allusions. On the one hand, Kutsa generally appears associated with Indra's theft of the Sun's wheel, and he appears in our verse 1. On the other, the final pāda of our hymn (6c) may refer, very indirectly, to the restoration of the Sun's wheel in heaven (see below).

Similar to the stopping of the Sun's chariot in 3a is the striking incident in 5cd, also referred to elsewhere (though rarely; see esp. II.15.6, IV.30.8–11), in which Indra smashes the cart of the goddess Dawn, and she runs away in fear. Again, this seems to involve a perturbation of the ordinary progress of time. In between, 4c presents the sun and the moon in some relationship, which is entirely unclear but which does not seem entirely positive.

The second half of the final verse (6) seems to show Indra remedying the situation, perhaps restoring both nightly and daily cosmic time. In 6c he places in heaven

"the apportioner of the months," presumably the moon, while in 6d "the father" (*pitā́*, the final word of the hymn), presumably Father Heaven, "bears the circlet split apart by you [=Indra]." If we are correct that the stopping of the Sun's chariot in 3a is a preliminary to the stealing of his chariot-wheel, then the "wheel-segment" borne by Heaven could be the disc of the Sun now restored to its proper place.

However, much remains unclear in this hymn, and the interpretations given here are quite tentative.

1. In partnership with you, Indra, these conveyors (of songs), conceiving the truth, thoroughly split apart the Vala cave,
   when, showing favor to the dawns, making the waters flow, you exerted your wondrous power (on them) and on the fertile cows, for the sake of Kutsa and at his thought.
2. You released the fecund females, and you made the mountains bend. You drove up the ruddy ones, and you drank the dear honey [=soma].
   By your wondrous power you made the wooden (cups) strong for it. The Sun blazed forth with the song born of truth.
3. The Sun unhitched his chariot in the middle of heaven. The Ārya found a match for the Dāsa.
   The firm fortifications of the crafty lord Pipru did Indra throw open, having acted together with Ṛjiśvan.
4. Defiant, he threw open the undefiable (fortifications); the unbridled one pulverized the ungodly treasure-houses.
   Like the Sun with the Moon, he took for his own the goods found in the fortress. Being sung, he shattered his rivals with his flashing (weapon).
5. Possessing weapons that cannot be combatted, the far-ranging Vṛtra-smasher, doing his pious work by means of his splitting (weapon), sharpens (the weapons) to be brandished.
   She feared to be battered by Indra's mace. The preening female ran away: Dawn left her cart behind.
6. These (deeds) worthy of fame are yours exclusively, in that you alone made him alone to be one lacking the sacrifice.
   You set the apportioner of the months [=moon] in heaven. The father [=Heaven] bears the segment of the wheel that was split off by you.

X.139 (965) Sūrya (1–3), Viśvāvasu (4–6)

Viśvāsu Devagandharva
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a companion piece to the previous one (X.138), though the Anukramaṇī ascribes them to different poets and assigns different deities to them. The evidence for their connection includes shared vocabulary and close lexical variants—e.g., *mádhye… diváḥ* 138.3 and *divó mádhye* 139.2 "in the middle of heaven"; *pradhí* ("wheel segment") 138.6 and *paridhí* ("encirclement") 139.4; *ahī́* "fertile cow" 138.1, 139.6; *daṃsáya* / *dáṃsas* 138.1, 2 "wondrous skill" and *dákṣa* 139.6 "skill, capability"—as well as ring composition: 138 begins with two verses about the opening of the Vala cave and the release of the fertile cows, and the final verse of 139 (vs. 6) returns to exactly this theme.

More subtle is their shared thematic concern. As noted in the introduction to 138, that hymn seems to treat disturbances to the orderly progress of cosmic time and the heavenly bodies that measure it, the sun, the moon, and dawn. By contrast X.139 focuses on the sun, in part through its (partial) representations: Savitar (vss. 1, 3) and the heavenly Gandharva (see also I.123, the Vena hymn, where Vena and the Gandharva represent an amalgam of the sun and Soma). The hymn also depicts the sun as holding its proper place and performing its proper functions. Though in this hymn (vs. 2) as in the last one (vs. 3) the sun stands still in the middle of heaven, in 138 this stoppage seemed ominous, whereas in this hymn the sun's position seems designed to give him the best view of the whole phenomenal world. It is repeatedly emphasized (vss. 1d, 2a, c, 3b) that he (or his representatives) sees everything, and as heavenly Gandharva he measures the airy realm (5b), again displaying proper cosmic progress.

It must be admitted, however, that many things remain unclear in this hymn, particularly verse 4.

1. With the rays of the sun, with golden hair, Savitar has raised up the unaging light from the east.
   At his instigation Pūṣan travels—the knowing cowherd surveying all beings.
2. With his eye on men, he sits in the middle of heaven, having filled both world-halves and the space between.
   He watches over (his mares? the ladles?) facing toward ghee, facing in all directions, between the eastern and the western beacon.
3. The foundation of wealth, the assembler of goods, he watches over all forms with his powers.
   Like god Savitar's, his ordinances hold true; like Indra, he stands at the confluence of spoils.
4. O Soma, the waters, having seen Viśvāvasu the Gandharva, then went apart by their truth.
   Indra, hastening, went down following that (truth?) of theirs. He looked around the encirclements of the sun.
5. Let Viśvāvasu sing it [=truth] to us—the heavenly Gandharva, the measurer of the airy realm—
   whether we know it to hold true or not. Spurring on insights, he should help just our insights.

6. He found the winner in the current of the rivers. He opened the doors for those with a rock as their pen.
   The Gandharva proclaimed their immortal (names). Indra came to know all about the capability of the fertile cows.

X.140 (966) Agni

Agni Pāvaka
6 verses: viṣṭārapaṅkti 1, satobṛhatī 2–4, upariṣṭājjyotis 5, triṣṭubh 6 [per the Anukramaṇī, but this doesn't accurately reflect the meter of 5 and 6. Former is rather satobṛhatī, while latter is 12 12 12 8]

Metrically varied but unremarkable in contents, this hymn recycles and enchains its vocabulary and phraseology while staying close to its core message: the ritual fire is lovely and brilliant, and it brings—or should bring—precious prizes to the humans who tend it.

1. O Agni, yours are fame and vitality; your beams flash greatly, o you with radiant goods.
   You of lofty radiance, with your power you establish a praiseworthy prize for the pious, o sage poet.
2. Of pure luster, of gleaming luster, of unfailing luster, you rise up with your radiance.
   As a son wandering between your two mothers, you approach (them) helpfully. You fill both world-halves.
3. O Child of Nourishment, Jātavedas, delight yourself with good lauds, when you are roused by hymnic visions.
   In you have those of brilliant help assembled precious-born refreshments of manifold forms.
4. O Agni, exerting control, have yourself extended by the (human) kinsmen. In us (be) riches, o immortal one.
   You rule over a wonder lovely to see. You (ful)fill your resolve that brings gain.
5. (You,) the preparer of refreshment for the ceremony, forethoughtful, holding sway over great benefit, (have they set in front)—
   you establish the well-portioned gift of a precious thing: great refreshment and wealth that brings gain.
6. (You) the truthful one, the buffalo lovely for all to see: Agni have the peoples set in front for benevolence—
   you with listening ears, of greatest extent, the divine one have the human generations (set in front) with a hymn.

X.141 (967) All Gods

Agni Tāpasa
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This simple hymn continues the message of the immediately preceding one, but with far less subtlety. The poet calls upon Agni (vss. 1, 3, 6, and implicitly 5) and an array of other gods, particularly Bṛhaspati (vss. 2–5), to ensure that he and his fellow officiants are well rewarded for their ritual service. The focus on Agni and Bṛhaspati clearly reflects the ritual orientation of the hymn, with Agni representing the physical activity of sacrifice and Bṛhaspati the verbal portion.

1. O Agni, address us here; facing us, become well-disposed to us.
   Provide for us, Lord of the Clan. You are a prize-giver to us.
2. Let Aryaman provide for us, let Bhaga, let Bṛhaspati,
   let the gods and let Liberality. Let the goddess give riches to us.
3. On King Soma for help, on Agni we call with hymns,
   on the Ādityas, on Viṣṇu, on Sūrya, and on Bṛhaspati the formulator.
4. On Indra and Vāyu, easy to call, on Bṛhaspati we call here,
   so that every person will be well-disposed to us on meeting.
5. Spur on Aryaman, Bṛhaspati, and Indra to give—
   Wind, Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī, and Savitar the prizewinner.
6. You, Agni, with your fires, strengthen our sacred formulation and the sacrifice.
   You, spur on the divine assemblage to give wealth to us.

X.142 (968) Agni

The four Śārṅgas: Jaritar 1–2, Droṇa 3–4, Sāriṣṛkva 5–6, Stambamitra 7–8
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–2, anuṣṭubh 7–8

Though short, this hymn displays both a well-articulated structure and intricate patterns of repetition and phonological echoes. The first six verses, in trimeter meter, have an outer ring (vss. 1, 6) and an inner, thematically contrasting core. Verse 1 praises the protective, ritual fire, and verse 6 returns to this prize-giving fire and the divine attendance upon it. In between, verses 2–5 describe fire as an ever-more-dangerous substance. Though in verse 2 the danger is confined and contrasted with the poets' successful productions, the following verses give free rein to the destructive power of wildfire with vivid descriptions of its progress through the land.

The final two verses, in a different meter, append a magical charm, to banish dangerous fire from the land and make that land the abode of water and plants.

The Anukramaṇī identifies "the four Śārṅgas" as the poets of the hymn. This is an allusion to an episode in the Mahābhārata (Śārṅgopākhyānam, MBh I.220–25),

in which four birds, sons of an ascetic, are spared by Agni during the otherwise complete burning of the Khāṇḍava Forest. This tale almost certainly postdates the composition of our hymn.

1. O Agni, this singer here has come to abide in you, for there exists no other friendship, o Son of Strength—
   for auspicious is your shelter, providing threefold defense. Put away in the distance the injurious missile.
2. Your birth, Agni, is a headlong plunge as you seek nourishment. You seem to bear down on all creatures at once.
   Our teams, our insightful thoughts shall gain the lead. They proceed in front like cowherds, by themselves.
3. And truly you bend around, snapping at the abundant brush, o Agni of independent power.
   And there come to be waste-places in the fields. Let us not antagonize your missile, your power.
4. When you travel to the heights and the depths, snapping, you go in all directions, like an army in greedy pursuit.
   When the wind fans your flame, like a barber a beard you shave the ground.
5. His ranks have appeared opposite—many chariots (along) a single downward course—
   when, o Agni, continually stroking your two arms, you go, bending downward, along the upstretching earth.
6. Let your blasts rear up, let your beam; let your prizes, Agni, for the one who labors for you.
   Arch up, bow down, as you grow. Let all the Vasus attend upon you today.
7. Here is the descending course of the waters, here the settling down of the sea.
   Make yourself another path from this one here. Proceed along it at will.
8. On your course hither and your course away let flowering dūrvā grass grow,
   and ponds and lotus blossoms. Here is the house of the sea.

X.143 (969) Aśvins

Atri Sāṃkhya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn is presumably one of the younger Atrids, not the Atri who is the eponymous poet of the Vth Maṇḍala, and the whole hymn is devoted to requests for help from the Aśvins for him and his fellows. In the first two verses he asks that the Aśvins aid him as they did others in past times. The third verse offers recompense for their aid: if they help him to produce insightful poems, these poems will be for them alone. Verses 4 and 6 expand the targets of the aid from Atri alone to his ritual companions, while verse 5 offers the mythological example of Bhujyu, often mentioned elsewhere as a client whose life the Aśvins saved, as a model for what we ourselves hope for.

1. (Make) also this Atri, grown old in the truth, (new again), to drive like a horse to his goal,
   when you two make Kakṣīvant new again, like a chariot.
2. (Unloose) also this one, like a prizewinning horse, to which the dustless (paths) have stretched themselves;
   unloose the youngest Atri, like a tight knot, (to stretch) across the airy realm.
3. You two most wondrous, resplendent men, seek to win insights for Atri,
   for then, o men of heaven, your praise song will never again (need) to be carved up [=shared with other gods].
4. O very bountiful Aśvins, your generosity and benevolence are to be noted in this:
   that you will bring us safely across to the broad seat and the (festive) assembly (of the sacrifice), o men.
5. Bhujyu, pitched and tossed in the sea at the far end of the airy realm—
   you drove to him with your winged ones. O Nāsatyas, make (our insight?) to win.
6. O most munificent ones possessing all property, (attend upon us) with your favors, like (parents) wishing (our) welfare;
   attend to refreshments for us that swell like a spring, o men.

X.144 (970) Indra

Suparṇa Tārkṣyaputra or Ūrdhvakṛśana Yāmāyana
6 verses: gāyatrī 1, 3–4, bṛhatī 2, satobṛhatī 5, viṣṭārapaṅkti 6

Although the Anukramaṇī names Indra as the divinity of this hymn, it is dominated by Soma. Indra appears only in the first and last (6) verses as the recipient of the soma drink, represented ring-compositionally by the "drop" (*indu*) in both verses. His return to the hymn is anticipated by the minimal *te* "for you" in the penultimate verse 5. In between the poet first describes Soma's talents (vss. 1–2), and then narrates (or alludes to the narrative of) the famous theft of Soma by the falcon. This account is highly poeticized, with vocabulary deployed in obscure metaphors. In our view both 3a and 4c refer, in very different ways, to the fortresses in which Soma

was confined (see IV.27.1 and IV.26.3 for the hundred fortresses, also keeping in mind that "fortress" [*púr*] is grammatically feminine). Since Soma is being guarded in heaven, when he looks down (vs. 3c) in search of his falcon rescuer he sees clouds, again metaphorically represented.

The vivifying effects of Soma are treated in verses 5–6, as is his role in reinforcing the relationship (*bandhútā* "family tie," 5d) between gods and men, by means of the sacrificial offering. Verse 6b may contain the first occurrences of the later notion of sacrifice as "surrender" (*tyāgá*, found here in a different nominal derivative of the same root, *tyájas*). Indra takes the oblation surrendered by men and places it among the gods.

1. Because this deathless drop here, like a courser, displays his mastery
   as lifelong skill for you, the ritual adept,
2. He is a craftsman in poetic art among us and a mace for the one
   generous with gifts.
   Like a craftsman, he brings the exhilarating drink with pearls [=bubbles]
   on top—the exhilarating drink that gets results.
3. Eager for the energetic falcon, the bull among his own females
   [=fortresses?]
   looked down at those puffing up like snakes [/swelling like fertile cows]
   [=clouds?] —
4. He whom the fine-feathered (bird), the son of the falcon, brought
   here from afar— him who had a hundred wheels [=concentric
   fortresses?]—who is the track of the fertile cow—
5. Whom the falcon brought here for you with his foot, the cherished
   one who keeps the wolf away, who is the ruddy housing of
   the stalk—
   by him is vitality, is lifetime lengthened for living; through him does our
   family tie stay vigilant.
6. Thus, by the drop Indra will secure that great surrender (of the offering)
   also among the gods.
   By your will is vitality, is lifetime lengthened, o you of strong will; by
   your will has this soma here been pressed from us.

X.145 (971) Against Cowives

Indrāṇī
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 6

Attributed to Indra's wife, Indrāṇī, this hymn is spoken in the 1st person by a woman conjuring against her cowife for the affections of their joint husband. In Atharvan style (and with an Atharvaveda correspondent, AVŚ III.18), it combines ritual/magic action with a verbal spell. The speaker digs the efficacious plant (vss. 1–2) and applies the plant to her husband (vs. 6), while confidently proclaiming her victory over her rival (esp. vss. 3–5). A similar hymn against cowives is found at X.159.

1. This plant do I dig, most powerful shoot,
   with which (a woman) repels her cowife, with which (she) acquires her
   own husband completely.
2. You with outstretched leaves, luck-bringing, god-sped, possessing
   victorious might—
   blow away my cowife, make my husband my own.
3. Higher am I, o higher one, higher even than the higher ones.
   But she who is my cowife, she is lower than the lower ones.
4. I do not take [=mention] her name, nor does she rest by this person
   [=husband].
   To the farthest farness we (all) make my cowife go.
5. I am gaining victory, and you [=plant] are victorious.
   Both having become victoriously mighty, we two shall be victorious over
   my cowife.
6. On you [=husband] have I laid the (plant) that wins victory; I have
   harnessed you with an even more victorious one.
   Let your mind run forth after me, like a cow after a calf, like water along
   its path.

X.146 (972) Lady of the Wilderness (Araṇyānī)

Devamuni Airammada
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This lovely and evocative hymn has been much translated. It is dedicated to the spirit of the *araṇya*, the wild place, and the contrast between the wild place and the settled one, an opposition that runs throughout Indian literature, dominates the hymn. Despite the ostensible dedication, the poet tries as much as possible to evade the wilderness and conjure up the safety of the village. From the start, in the first verse he expresses surprise that the Lady of the Wilderness herself doesn't inquire for a village or settlement (*grā́mam*); he is surprised that she is not afraid of her own domain. The strange sounds that accompany the Lady in her progress and the strange (and unidentified) animals that make those sounds in verse 2 clearly unsettle the poet, and in verses 3 and 4 the poet, seeming himself to be in the wilderness at nightfall, attempts to transform the threatening sights and sounds of the wild into reassuring domestic scenes—cows grazing and lowing, woodsmen, the creak of a cart—though this cheerful self-deception does not last. The poet abruptly breaks off the sequence with "(something) has shrieked!" The final two verses of this short hymn contain a formal praise of

Araṇyānī, but even this begins with the negative, and slightly nervous, reassurance that she doesn't kill unless she's attacked; the positive portions of the praise come second.

1. O Lady of the Wilderness, Lady of the Wilderness, you there, who seem to be lost just ahead.
   How is that you don't ask for the village? Does fear not find you at all?
2. When the *ciccika* (bird?/bug?) helps out the bull-roarer [=frog? bird?] as it speaks,
   the Lady of the Wilderness displays her greatness like (a king?) who hurtles along amid the clash of cymbals.
3. And it's as if cows are eating and as if a settlement is seen,
   and the Lady of the Wilderness at evening—it's as if there's a cart creaking.
4. Surely it's someone calling his cow; surely another has been splitting wood.
   But staying by the Lady of the Wilderness at evening, one imagines "(Something) has shrieked!"
5. In truth, the Lady of the Wilderness does no slaughter, if someone else does not attack.
   Having eaten sweet fruit, one settles down at pleasure.
6. Fragrant with ointments, sweet-smelling, providing much food though she does no plowing,
   the Mother of wild beasts, the Lady of the Wilderness have I proclaimed.

X.147 (973) Indra

Suvedas Śairīṣi
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

The poet begins his hymn (vs. 1, 2ab) by proclaiming his trust in Indra's "battle fury" (*manyú*), on the basis of the god's deeds and his dominance over the cosmic spaces. It turns out that the poet has something more than simply praise on his mind. Indra and his battle fury are much in demand among men in search of victory and its spoils (vs. 2cd), and the poet recommends his patrons to Indra's attention and care (vs. 3). He realizes, however, that securing Indra's help requires proper ritual observance (vs. 4). The hymn ends (vs. 5) with explicit requests for Indra's aid and bounty, such desires having been only indirectly expressed earlier in the hymn.

1. I put my trust in your foremost battle-fury, in that you smashed Vṛtra and labored at the manly work,
   in that both world-halves yield to you and even earth trembles from your tempest, o possessor of the stone.

2. You, faultless one, with your wiles shook wily Vṛtra to pieces, with your fame-seeking mind.
   Just you do superior men choose in their quests for cattle, you when all sacrifices are to be offered.
3. Take pleasure in these patrons, o much-invoked one, the strengtheners who have attained to your bounty, bounteous one.
   They chant to (you) the prizewinner when kith and kin (are at issue), in (hostile) encirclements, at the winning of wisdom, when immoderate stakes (are set).
4. Just that man will find pleasure in wealth that is easy to bear away who will realize that the exhilaration of this one [=Indra] is to be hastened.
   With you as his strengthener, bounteous one, one who performs pious ceremonies quickly bears away the prize, the stakes, along with his men.
5. You—being sung, make wide (space) for the troop with your greatness, bounteous one; show mastery over wealth.
   You are an ally [/Mitra] to us, wily like Varuṇa. You distribute (wealth) like an apportioner of food, wondrous one.

X.148 (974) Indra

Pṛthu Vainya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn offers some tricky bits of syntax and phraseology in what is otherwise a standard praise of Indra and request for his aid. The poet seems especially aware that Indra bestows his aid on those whom he likes (see esp. vss. 1c, 3b, 4c) and so emphasizes men's need to offer abundant praise and oblations with a cheerful spirit.

1. After having pressed soma we praise you, Indra, and also after having won the prize, you powerfully manly one.
   Bring us well-being (for him) in whom you take pleasure. Through ourselves and our lineage may we win, aided by you.
2. Lofty were you when you were just born, o champion Indra. Along with the sun, you should overcome the Dāsa clans,
   (as you did) the one placed in hiding, fit to be hidden, hidden in the waters [=Vṛtra]. We offer soma as if in a gushing (stream).
3. Or, (Indra,) chant in response to the hymns of the stranger—as the wise one, inspired poet among the seers, taking pleasure in good thinking.
   May we be the ones who find enjoyment by means of the soma drinks—through this and through the portions for you, who are conveyed on a chariot.

4. These sacred formulations here have been recited to you, Indra. Give the might of men to men, o champion.
   Be of the same resolve with those in whom you take pleasure. And protect the singers and their people.
5. Hear the call from Pṛthī, o champion Indra, and you will be praised by the chants of Venya,
   who has roared toward your ghee-filled womb. Like a wave along the depths, (his chants) run (there) billowing.

X.149 (975) Savitar

Arcat Hiraṇyastūpa
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn is identified by the Anukramaṇī as a descendant of Hiraṇyastūpa, and in the last verse (6) the poet compares his own invocation of Savitar with that of Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa, who, in fact, appears in the Anukramaṇī as the author of I.31–35 and IX.4 and 6—with I.35 also a hymn to Savitar. Thus this hymn may be making a cross reference to another hymn in the saṃhitā. Although there are no blatant links between the two hymns, both are concerned with the divisions of the cosmos and Savitar's relationship to them. In this hymn especially Savitar's cosmogonic role is highlighted.

1. Savitar brought the earth to rest with his fastening straps; in the place with no prop Savitar made heaven fast.
   Savitar has milked the boisterous midspace like a stallion, (has milked out) the sea bound within the unfathomable (realm).
2. Where the propped-up sea flooded forth—Savitar knows that, o Child of the Waters—
   from there was the world, from there was the airy realm arisen; from there heaven and earth spread out.
3. After this (world) here there came into being the other one [=heaven], deserving the sacrifice, with its fill of immortal creation.
   Certainly the fine-feathered Garutmant(-bird) of Savitar [=sun] was born earlier, and it (was born) in accordance with his support.
4. Like cows to the village, like a warrior to his horses, like a bellowing, benevolent milker to her calf,
   like a husband to his wife—let him come down to us, the supporter of heaven, Savitar bringing all desirable things.
5. Just as Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa called on you, Savitar, when this prize (was in question),
   even so, chanting to you for help, extolling you, I stay wakeful facing toward you, as if toward the plant of soma.

X.150 (976) Agni

Mṛḍīka Vāsiṣṭha
5 verses: bṛhatī 1–3, upariṣṭājjyotis or jagatī 4, upariṣṭājjyotis 5

A simple hymn with a rigid skeletal structure, despite the variety of meters. The last pāda of every verse begins with a form of *mṛḍīká* "grace, mercy," in all but verse 4 the dative *mṛḍīkā́ya*. (This repetition is clearly responsible for the Anukramaṇī's ascription to a poet with the given name Mṛḍīka.) The object of the poet's address throughout is the god Agni; for the first half of the hymn (through vs. 3ab) he is unnamed though easily identifiable from his attributes; from then on a form of his name opens every hemistich. The contents of the hymn are quite straightforward: Agni is urged to come to our sacrifice, bringing the gods along. In the final verse (5) his aid to various legendary humans is recalled, and the poet names himself as Vasiṣṭha (or "best one")—again, no doubt responsible for the Anukramaṇī's patronymic Vāsiṣṭha, although the distinctive clan refrain of the Vasiṣṭhas is not present.

The final two verses also contain the epithet *puróhita*, literally "set in front," applied first to Agni (4a) and then to the poet Vasiṣṭha (5cd). Ritually speaking the sacrificial fire is indeed "set in front": the offering fire is established on the eastern edge of the ritual ground. However, there is no clear ritual reason to refer to the poet as "set in front," and it seems likely that in this late hymn the term has already become the designation of a particular type of priest, in later times the king's "house-priest."

1. Even when you have been kindled, you are kindled (again), o oblation-bearer for the gods.
   With the Ādityas, the Rudras, the Vasus, come to us here. For grace come to us here.
2. This sacrifice here—having delighted in this speech, come near to it.
   We mortals call you, kindled one; for grace we call.
3. You, Jātavedas, granting all wishes, do I hymn with my insightful thought.
   O Agni, bring here to us the gods whose commandments are dear, for grace (bring) those whose commandments are dear.
4. Agni, the god, became the one set in front [/Purohita] of the gods; Agni have the human seers kindled.
   Agni do I invoke greatly at the winning of the stakes; (I invoke) his grace for the winning of the stakes.
5. Agni helped Atri, Bharadvāja, Gaviṣṭhira, helped Kaṇva and Trasadasyu for us at the challenge.
   Agni does Vasiṣṭha, set in front [/Purohita], call; for grace does the one set in front [/Purohita] (call).

X.151 (977) Śraddhā

Śraddhā Kāmāyanī
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

The word *śraddhā́*, often translated "faith," has a long and culturally freighted history in Indic religion. In its Vedic origins it refers not to "faith," at least in the Western, Christian sense (cf. its Latin cognate *credō*), but rather to "trust"—especially in the efficacy of cultural institutions, and there especially in hospitality and the sacrifice, itself a specialized type of hospitality. (For further discussion see Jamison [1996a: 176–84].)

In this hymn its close ties to the sacrifice are quite clear. Note especially the last verse (5), which makes not-so-veiled reference to the three soma-pressings; the appearance of Vāyu in the previous verse probably refers to the fact that he receives the first soma offering at the Morning Pressing. One of the important facets of trust in the sacrifice is the certainty that a properly performed sacrifice will produce material rewards for the performer, and this belief is reflected throughout the hymn; see especially verses 2–4.

1. With trust is the fire kindled; with trust is the oblation poured.
   We at the head of good fortune make known our trust with speech.
2. O Trust, this (speech) spoken by me: make it dear to him who gives, dear to him who intends to give,
   and dear among the benefactors who offer sacrifice, o Trust.
3. Just the gods created trust in themselves among the powerful lords,
   so among the benefactors who offer sacrifice make what has been spoken by us trust(ed).
4. Trust do the gods revere, sacrificing for themselves with Vāyu as their herdsman—
   trust, with a purpose that comes from their heart. By trust one gains possession of goods.
5. Trust do we call early in the morning, trust at midday,
   trust at the setting of the sun. O Trust, place a trusting heart here in us.

X.152 (978) Indra

Śāsa Bhāradvāja
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

The martial Indra, the "commander," is called upon here to destroy our various enemies. A surprising amount of attention is given to "the scornful" (vss. 2–4). Although verbal abuse may not seem to modern mentalities to pose the same sort of threat as more physical assaults, the ancient Indian belief in the power of speech to inflict real harm is on view here. At issue may also be ritualized exchanges of insults before battle.

1. As commander, you are great in just this way: as the infallible devourer of foes,
   whose comrade is not slain nor is he ever conquered.
2. As the lord of the clan who gives well-being, the Vṛtra-smasher, (smasher) of the scornful, exerting his will—
   let the bull Indra go before us, the soma-drinker, the creator of fearlessness.
3. Smash away the demon, away the scornful; break apart the jaws of Vṛtra.
   O Indra, Vṛtra-smasher, (smash) away the battle fury of the foe who assails us.
4. Smash away the scornful for us, Indra. Hold down those who battle us.
   Who assails us, make him go to lower darkness.
5. Away with the thought of him who hates (us), Indra; away with the deadly weapon of the one who seeks to despoil (us).
   Extend shelter (to us) from battle fury. Keep the deadly weapon a wide way away.

X.153 (979) Indra

Devajāmaya Indramātaraḥ
5 verses: gāyatrī

The first verse of this hymn presents a tender image of unidentified females rocking the baby Indra, and verse 2 continues with a more conventional treatment of his birth. But the birth motif disappears (except for an attenuated version in vs. 5c): the hymn then continues with standard praise of his powers—the word *ójas* "might" is positioned prominently in four of the five verses (2–5).

1. Rocking (him), the busy women attend upon the new-born Indra,
   receiving (him) as their share of the abundance of heroes.
2. You, Indra, were born from power, from strength, from might.
   You, bull, are really a bull.
3. You, Indra, are the smasher of Vṛtra. You spread out the midspace.
   You propped up heaven with your might.
4. You, Indra, carry in your arms the chant for joint enjoyment,
   while sharpening your mace with your might.
5. You, Indra, dominate all created things by your might.
   You came into being throughout all the worlds.

X.154 (980) To a Dead Man

Yamī
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn has a parallel in the Atharvaveda (XVIII.2.14–18), where it is found among the funeral verses, and in the ritual sūtras it is used at the burning of the corpse. Each verse describes the character and habits of the distinguished forefathers now resident in the other world, and ends with a refrain urging the dead man to go and join them there.

1. Soma purifies himself for some; others reverently approach ghee.
   Those for whom honey flows forth—right to them let him go now.
2. Those who were unassailable because of their fervor, who have gone to the sun because of their fervor,
   who have made their own fervor into greatness—right to them let him go now.
3. Those who fight in prize-contests, who as champions abandon their bodies,
   or who confer a thousand priestly gifts—right to them let him go now.
4. Also those ancients who were servers of truth, truthful, strong through truth,
   the forefathers full of fervor, o Yama—right to them let him go now.
5. The poets of a thousand devices who protect the sun,
   the seers full of fervor, o Yama—to those born of fervor let him go now.

X.155 (981) Spell to Remove Misfortune (1, 4), Brahmaṇaspati (2–3), All Gods (5) [Against a Witch]

Śirimbiṭha Bhāradvāja
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

A type of female demon known as the Sadān(u)vā is the target of this Atharvan-type hymn; the Sadānvā is found only here in the Ṛgveda, but is well represented in the Atharvaveda (AVŚ II.14, AVP II.4, V.1 and 9, VI.8.1, etc.; see further discussion and references in Zehnder 1999, Lubotsky 2002, Griffiths 2009 ad locc.). The Sadānvās are monumentally ugly (vs. 1) and seem to pose a threat especially to unborn children (vs. 2) and, in the Atharvaveda passages, to the household and livestock in general. In this hymn they are also sexually menacing and sexually repulsive (vs. 4).

In the first three verses the Sadānvā is attacked and sent away in good Atharvan fashion, but the hymn takes another rhetorical turn starting in verse 4, which announces the defeat of Indra's rivals in the high style of a victory paean, to the apparent accompaniment of the Sadānvās beating their breasts in stylized mourning. And in verse 5 the defeat of the hostile forces has been effected not by an Atharvan-like charm, as in the earlier parts of the hymn, but by ritual activity on the sacrificial ground and by the creation of "fame" among the gods—both features that are associated with the more solemn Ṛgvedic priestly and martial ethic. This shift in diction and attitude is striking, and it may have been felt necessary (or at least desirable) to "Ṛgvedify" the charm when it was incorporated into the Ṛgveda collection.

1. You one-eyed, deformed demoness, go to the mountain—you Sadānvā.
   With the warriors of Śirimbiṭha, with them we banish you.
2. She is banished from here, banished from yonder, having assailed all fetuses.
   Go at the demoness, o sharp-horned Brahmaṇaspati, and gore her.
3. That piece of wood over there that floats to the farther shore of the river with no man at the helm,
   grab hold of that, you with your evil jaws: with it go in the farther distance.
4. When you women with rusty "boxes" [=genitals], leaning forward, *beat your breast,
   slain were all the rivals of Indra—with their ejaculations ["spurts"] (dissipated like) bubbles.
5. These (men) here have led the cow around; they have taken the fire around.
   They have made themselves fame among the gods. Who will venture against them?

X.156 (982) Agni

Ketu Āgneya
5 verses: gāyatrī

The ritual setting for this hymn is given in verses 4–5: the kindling of fire at sunrise. The first three verses express the hope that this kindling of the fire will bring goods to the ritual participants, an oblique reference to the distribution of the priestly gifts at the Morning Pressing. This blatant desire for reward is somewhat camouflaged by couching it in terms of contests (vs. 1), cattle raids (vs. 2), and chariot racing (vs. 3).

1. Let our thoughts spur Agni on, like a swift span in the contests;
   with him might we win prize after prize.
2. The weapon with which we will make the cows our own by your help, o Agni,
   spur that on—to give us bounties.

3. Agni, bring here brawny wealth, broad and rich in cows and horses.
   Lubricate the wheel-nave, make the niggard roll.
4. Agni, you make the unaging heavenly body, the sun, mount in heaven,
   as you establish light for the peoples.
5. Agni, you are the beacon of the clans, dearest, fairest lap-child.
   Awaken, as you establish vitality for your praiser.

X.157 (983) All Gods

Bhuvana Āptya or Sādhana Bhauvana
5 verses: dvipadā triṣṭubh

Short and simple, this hymn calls for help and cooperation from Indra and a variety of gods in the first three verses. The last two verses are notable for what is probably the only reflection in the Ṛgveda of that corporate entity, the Asuras, and of the eternal hostility between them and the Devas ("gods"), ubiquitous in middle Vedic and providing a major mythological cycle in those texts. Elsewhere in the Ṛgveda the word *ásura* generally means "lord" and is applied to gods as well as to humans, viewed positively or negatively. It is only in this very late hymn that we see the germ of the later division of divine beings into the two inimical moieties of Devas and Asuras. For further on this question, which has important implications for Indo-Iranian as well as Vedic religion, see Wash Edward Hale (1986) as well as the discussion in our introduction and passim.

1. These living worlds here let us bring to success—we and Indra and all
   the gods.
2. Our sacrifice and our own body and our offspring may Indra, along with
   the Ādityas, set in order.
3. Along with the Ādityas, let Indra, flocking with the Maruts, be the helper
   of our bodies.
4. The gods upon having smashed the Asuras when they came—the gods
   guarding their own godhood—
5. Led the ray [=sun] to face toward (us) with their skills. Just after that
   they surveyed their vigorous self-power.

X.158 (984) Sūrya

Cakṣus Saurya
5 verses: gāyatrī

The sun as the eye in heaven, which enables us to see ourselves and the world, is the theme of this hymn, especially of the last three verses (3–5). The first verse is a request for universal protection in all parts of the cosmos; the ablative ("from") phrases are ambiguous: they may refer to hostile forces located in the various parts of the cosmos, or to the locations from which the protectors are exercising their function. The second verse to Savitar continues the protection theme, but otherwise ill fits the hymn and may be here because of Savitar's role in verse 3.

The given name assigned to the poet by the Anukramaṇī, Cakṣus, is simply adopted from the common noun *cákṣus* "eye" found repeatedly in verses 3–4; his patronymic means "Son of Sūrya."

1. Let the Sun protect us from heaven, the Wind from the midspace;
   let Agni (protect) us from the earthly ones.
2. I shall find pleasure in you, o Savitar, whose flaring is worth a hundred
   impulsions [/soma-pressings].
   Protect us from the heavenly missile as it flies.
3. The eye [=sun] (let) god Savitar (place) for us, and the eye (let) the
   Mountain;
   the eye let the Placer place for us.
4. Place the eye for our eyeing, the eye for us to see for ourselves.
   May we look at this (world) both whole and distinct.
5. May we look toward you, wholly good to see, o Sun.
   May we, (though) we have the eyes of men [/(because) we possess the
   "eye of men" (=sun)], see distinctly.

X.159 (985) Against Cowives

Śacī Paulomī
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

Like X.145 this hymn is in the voice of a woman, speaking in the 1st person, against her cowives. But, whereas in X.145 she was in the act of performing the spell with which she hoped to vanquish her cowife, in this hymn her triumph is complete. She recites a victory paean, in the appropriate high rhetorical style—albeit with some dips into the vernacular, such as the diminutivized derivative of the personal pronoun in verse 1, *māmakā́* "li'l ole me." It is worth noting that in verse 3 she extends her triumph to her sons and her daughter; as the early parts of the Rāmāyaṇa teach us, one of the most important reasons that cowives plot against each other is to secure preferment for their children.

1. Up has gone yonder sun; up this good fortune of li'l ole me.
   I, a cunning woman, now have gained victory over my husband, (so that
   I am) victorious.
2. I am the beacon; I am the head; I am the powerful debater.
   Only my will should my husband follow, when I am victorious.

3. My sons are rival-smiters, and my daughter is a wide ruler.
   And I am a complete conqueror. To my husband my signal-call is the highest.
4. The oblation through which Indra, when he performed it, became the highest brilliant one,
   that (oblation) I have now performed, o gods: I have therefore become without cowives.
5. Without cowives, smiting cowives, conquering, overcoming—
   I have ripped off the luster of the other women, like the gifts of the feckless.
6. I have completely conquered them, overcoming the cowives,
   so that I will rule widely over this hero and over his people.

X.160 (986) Indra

Purāṇa Vāiśvāmitra
5 verses: triṣṭubh

A straightforward invitation to soma-drinking, also expressing the usual fear that Indra will attend another sacrifice (vs. 1) and the usual smug awareness that a non-presser will be punished (vs. 4). According to the Anukramaṇī, the poet is a descendant of the Viśvāmitras, and the last two words of the hymn, *śunáṃ huvema* "for blessing we would invoke" are the first two words of the Viśvāmitra clan refrain, found in most of the Viśvāmitra triṣṭubh Indra hymns (III.30.22, etc.).

1. Drink of this sharp vitalizing (soma). Here unhitch your two fallow bays, chariot and all.
   O Indra, let the other sacrificers not stop you: yours are these pressed (soma drinks) here.
2. Yours are those (already) pressed and yours are those to be pressed. You do the swelling hymns call hither.
   O Indra, enjoying this pressing today, knowing everything, drink the soma here.
3. The man who with willing mind, with his whole heart, with desire for the gods, presses soma for him,
   Indra does not give away *his* cows. He [=presser] makes (his soma) acclaimed and dear to him [=Indra].
4. That one becomes spied out by him—the rich man who does not press soma for him.
   The bounteous one holds him out by the elbow [=at arm's length?].
   The one without precedent [=Indra] smites the haters of sacred formulations.

5. Seeking horses, seeking cows, seeking prizes, we call upon you to come right up to us.
   Attending to your new benevolence, we would invoke you for blessing, Indra.

X.161 (987) Against Disease

Yakṣmanāśana Prājāpatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 5

With Atharvaveda parallels (AVŚ III.11.1–4, VIII.1.20; AVP I.62), this charm announces the restoration to life, indeed long life, of a man who has succumbed to some disease or other (vs. 1).

1. I release you, with an oblation, to living, from the unknown disease, from the kingly disease.
   Or if a Grabber has truly grabbed him in this way, from her, o Indra and Agni, release him.
2. If his lifetime is exhausted, or he is (already) departed, or if he has just gone down to the face of death,
   I bring him here from the lap of Dissolution. I have redeemed him for a hundred autumns.
3. With an oblation with a thousand eyes, conferring a hundred autumns and a hundred lifetimes, I have brought him here,
   so that Indra will lead him through a hundred autumns to the far shore of all difficult going.
4. Live in strength for a hundred autumns, a hundred winters, and a hundred springs.
   For a hundred (years) let Indra and Agni, Savitar, and Bṛhaspati restore him, with an oblation conferring a hundred lifetimes.
5. I have brought you here; I have found you. You have come here again, o you who are new again.
   O you with hale limbs, I have found your eye hale and your lifetime whole.

X.162 (988) Against Miscarriage

Rakṣohan Brāhma
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This charm is meant to deflect the dangers of miscarriage or harm to the embryo in any stage, including immediately after birth. The stages of pregnancy are nicely

laid out in verse 3, a good example of the indirect means by which we can gain information about Vedic people's knowledge and conceptualization of "real life." The methods by which the "ill-named affliction" might gain access to the fetus are graphically depicted in verses 4–6. In verse 5 it is somewhat startling that masquerading as a brother (in addition to husband or lover) would give intimate access to the pregnant woman; this whiff of incest is reminiscent of the situation between the siblings Yama and Yamī in X.10.

1. In concert with a sacred formulation let Agni, demon-smasher, repel
   from here
   whatever evil-named affliction lies on your embryo, in your womb.
2. Whatever evil-named affliction lies on your embryo, in your womb,
   Agni, along with a sacred formulation, has banished the flesh-eater.
3. Who smites your (embryo) as it flies, when it is emplanted, as it squirms,
   who intends to smite your (embryo) when it is just born, that one we
   banish from here.
4. Who pries apart your thighs, lies between the married couple,
   who licks within your womb, that one we banish from here.
5. Who, having become brother, husband, lover, goes down on you,
   who intends to smite your offspring, that one we banish from here.
6. Who, having stupefied you with sleep, with darkness, goes down on you,
   who intends to smite your offspring, that one we banish from here.

X.163 (989) Against Disease

Vivṛhan Kāśyapa
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

Like X.161, this is another charm against disease with Atharvan parallels (AVŚ II.33, AVP IV.7). This hymn provides us with what we might term a body-part litany. The officiant declares the removal of disease from a series of related body parts in each verse, each associated with a particular area of the body—another valuable window on how Vedic peoples divided up and named reality. Although the names of the more standard body parts (eyes, ears, etc.) are well known and have well-established cognates, the identification of some of the more obscure terms is uncertain, though the locational association narrows the range of possibilities.

1. From your eyes, your nostrils, your ears, your chin,
   I tear the disease of the head out of you—from your brain, your
   tongue.
2. From your neck(bones?), the (bones of the?) nape of your neck, your
   vertebrae, your backbone,
   I tear the disease of the torso out of you—from your shoulders, from
   your arms.

3. From your entrails, your guts, your rectum, your heart,
   I tear out the disease—from your kidneys, your liver, your intestines.
4. From your thighs, your knee-sockets, your heels, the front of your feet,
   I tear out the disease—from your hips, your backside, your buttocks.
5. From your urinator, your love-maker, your hair, your nails,
   I tear this disease here out—from your whole body.
6. From every limb, from every hair, what is born in every joint,
   I tear this disease here out—from your whole body.

X.164 (990) Against Nightmare

Pracetas Āṅgirasa
5 verses: anuṣṭubh 1, 2, 4, triṣṭubh 3, paṅkti 5

The Anukramaṇī labels this hymn *duḥsvapnaghnam*, literally "destroying bad dreams," while Geldner titles it "Absolution from Sins" and Renou simply "Expiation." None of these characterizations quite captures the varied semantic field of this brief hymn. It begins with the curt dismissal of an otherwise unknown "Lord of Thought" (or "Lord of Mind"), ordering him to go far away and speak to the goddess Dissolution (Nirṛti), who presides over chaos and calamity. The Lord of Thought is to provide her with some examples of men's thoughts, in verse 2. These examples seem to be the sort of harmless self-delusions whereby people reassure themselves that all is going well for them. But in verses 3 and 4 the verbal behavior becomes less innocent—culminating in one of the worst offenses in Vedic India (and indeed Indo-Iranian), deceit (vs. 4). We ask various gods, including Indra "Lord of the Sacred Formulation" (voc. *brahmaṇas pate*), presumably Indra in his role as Bṛhaspati, to distance these offenses from us. The final verse celebrates the success of this request and expresses our desire that all such offenses be visited on our enemy.

The unifying theme of the hymn is thus all sorts of mental and verbal action, whether harmless or hostile, whether done consciously (awake) or not (asleep), or even both (the "waking dream" of vs. 5).

1. Go away, o Lord of Thought—stride away; move far away.
   (When) far away, announce to Dissolution: "Of many kinds is the
   thought of the living.
2. "Lucky is the choice they make; lucky the right (horse) they yoke;
   lucky the eye (they keep) on the son of Vivasvant [=Yama] (—or so they
   think). In many places is the thought of the living."
3. Whatever pass we've reached by hope, by blame, by curse, when awake or
   sleeping.
   let Agni put away, at a distance from us, all those things ill-done and
   unpleasing.

4. O Indra, lord of the sacred formulation, if we practice deceit,
   let the attentive Āṅgiras protect us from the coercion of those who hate us.
5. We have conquered today, and we have won: we have become without offense.
   The waking dream, the evil intent—let it land on him whom we hate, let it land on him who hates us.

X.165 (991) All Gods (Bird of Ill Omen)

Kapota Nairṛta
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Though the Anukramaṇī identifies the dedicands as the All Gods, the hymn is entirely devoted to countering the possible evil effects of a bird of ill-omen, the dove of death, sent as a messenger from Yama, the lord of the dead. Not surprisingly, given their style and contents, the verses of this hymn are found in variant form in the Atharvaveda (AVŚ VI.27, 29.1, 28.1).

1. O gods, when the dove, sent as a messenger of Dissolution, has come here to seek,
   we will chant to it, and we will perform expulsion. Let there be weal for our two-footed, weal for our four-footed.
2. Let the dove that has been sent be kindly to us; o gods, let the omen-bird be without offense in our house.
   Let Agni, the inspired poet, take pleasure in our oblation, and so let the winged missile avoid us.
3. The winged missile will not take us by deception. In the corner [?] it sets its footprint in the fireplace.
   Let there be weal for our cattle and for our humans. Let the dove not harm us here, o gods.
4. When the owl screeches, that comes to nothing; likewise when the dove set its footprint in the fire.
   The one for whom it was sent forth as messenger—to that one let there be reverence: to Yama, (who is) Death.
5. With (this) verse give the dove a push. Rejoicing in refreshment, lead your cow around,
   effacing all difficulties. Having left for us our strengthening nourishment, it will fly away the fastest in flight.

X.166 (992) Against Rivals

Ṛṣabha Vairāja or Ṛṣabha Śākvara
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except mahāpaṅkti 5

The extremely aggressive 1st-person speaker of this hymn proclaims his triumph over his rivals and their utter humiliation. Using the well-nigh universal tropes of high and low, he repeatedly emphasizes the spatial (and thus conceptual) position of his defeated enemies, who are literally beneath his feet (vss. 2, 5; see also vss. 3–4). Verse 4 is notable for the trio of attributes that the speaker seizes from his rivals, a set that easily accommodates a trifunctional (Dumézilian) analysis: "cognition" as the higher mental power appropriate to the priestly First Function, "commandment" representative of the warrior-ruler Second Function, and "company, assembly" the Third Function mass of followers. Although we are not over-sympathetic to the Dumézilian paradigm, this particular passage gains resonance from such an analysis.

1. Make me bull over my equals, widely victorious over my rivals, smiter of my rivals, wide-ruling cattle-lord of cattle.
2. I am a smiter of rivals, like Indra, unharmable, invulnerable.
   Beneath my feet are my rivals: all these here have been stood upon.
3. Right here I bind you, like the two ends of a bow with a bowstring.
   O Lord of Speech, drive these down, so that they will speak lower than me.
4. I have come here on top, with Viśvakarman as my foundation.
   I take for myself your cognition, your commandment, and your assembled company.
5. Having taken for myself your yoking up [=war] and your peace, might I become the highest. I have trampled on your head.
   From beneath my feet, lift up your speech to me, like frogs from the water, like frogs from the water.

X.167 (993) Indra (1–2, 4), Assorted Divinities (3)

Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni
4 verses: jagatī

A fairly conventional invitation to the soma sacrifice. One of Indra's great deeds, the conquering of the sun, is alluded to (vss. 1–2), and already in verse 1 he is asked for wealth. The final verse is spoken by Indra himself, who accepts both the soma and the praise while recognizing that he is entitled to these offerings only if he provides good things in return. One noteworthy feature is the poet-priest's claim to have himself consumed copious amounts of soma (vs. 4).

1. This honey is poured around for you, Indra: you rule over the tub of pressed soma.
   Make for us wealth consisting of many heroes. Having heated up your heat all around, you conquered the sun.
2. The conqueror of the sun who finds great exhilaration in the soma-stalk do we call here to the pressings—the all-around able one.
   Take notice of this sacrifice of ours here. Come here! We beseech the bounteous one who conquers his opponents.
3. Under the ordinance of King Soma and King Varuṇa and under the protection of Bṛhaspati and Anumati,
   today at our praise invocation of you, bounteous one, I consumed tubs (of soma), you establisher and regulator.
4. [Indra:] Urged on, I have done my own consuming at the vat, and as the foremost patron, I sweep up this praise song,
   if at the pressing I have come back to you two, Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, in your house with the winnings.

X.168 (994) Vāyu

Anila Vātāyana
4 verses: triṣṭubh

As with X.186, the Anukramaṇī identifies the deity of the hymn as Vāyu, the god of wind who has been integrated into the ritual system, as the first god, with Indra, to receive the soma drink at the Morning Pressing. But again, as in X.186, the hymn only mentions Vāta, a god of wind with more physical and natural characteristics of wind than Vāyu and little or no ritual profile. Nonetheless, Vāta is given full-dress eulogistic treatment in this little hymn: The first verse begins with his name, and the opening, "now the greatness [acc.] of Wind..." (*vā́tasya nú mahimā́nam...*), recalls celebratory openings like I.32.1 *índrasya nú vīryā̀ṇi*... "now the heroic deeds of Indra..."). The final pāda (vs. 4d) is a standard formula of homage, with the recipient in the dative ("to him, to Wind...") and an instrumental of the type of offering ("with our oblation"), ending with the 1st plural optative *vidhema* "might we do honor"); see numerous parallels, including VIII.48.12–13, I.121.1–9.

In between the swift progress of Wind, his chariot, and his retinue (which we consider to be the eddies and gusts that are characteristic of any strong wind) is nicely described.

1. Now (I shall proclaim) the greatness of Wind and of his chariot: shattering as he goes; thundering is his sound.
   Touching heaven as he drives, turning things red, and tossing up dust from the earth as he goes.

2. The dispersed eddies of the Wind press forward together following (him). They go to him, like girls to a festive gathering.
   Yoked together with them on the same chariot, the god speeds on as king of this whole world.
3. Speeding along the paths in the midspace, he does not settle down on any single day.
   Comrade of the waters, the first-born abiding by truth—where was he born? from where has he arisen?
4. The breath of the gods, the embryo of the world, this god wanders as he wishes.
   Only his sounds are heard, not his form. To him, to the Wind, we would do honor with our oblation.

X.169 (995) Cows

Śabara Kākṣīvata
4 verses: triṣṭubh

For the protection, thriving, and safe return of the cows, invoking a formidable range of gods to ensure these goals. In later ritual the first two verses are spoken when the cows go to pasture, the latter two when they return home.

1. Let the wind, joy itself, blow to the ruddy ones. Let them crop plants full of nourishment.
   Let them drink (waters) full of fat, providing riches to the living. Setting them loose, Rudra, be merciful to our food on the hoof.
2. Those who are of the same color, of different colors, of one color, whose names Agni knows because of the sacrifice,
   whom the Aṅgirases brought here by their fervent heat—to those, o Parjanya, extend great shelter.
3. Who raised their own body up among the gods (as oblation), of whom Soma knows all the colors,
   swelling with milk, rich in offspring, grant them to us in our stable, Indra.
4. Prajāpati, having given them to me, in concord with all the gods and the forefathers,
   has sent them here, being well-disposed, to our stable. Might we reside together with their offspring.

X.170 (996) Sūrya

Vibhrāj Saurya
4 verses: jagatī, except āstārapaṅkti 4

This hymn celebrates the god Sun, or more specifically his light, in terms more usually applied to heroic warrior-gods like Indra.

1. Let the lofty (light) blazing forth drink the somian honey, imparting an unswerving lifetime on the lord of the sacrifice—
   he who, sped by the wind, stands guard by himself, he fosters the creatures; he rules [/shines] widely in many places.
2. The lofty (light) blazing forth, well supported, best winner of prizes, real, is fitted into the foundation, the buttress of heaven.
   Smasher of foes, smasher of obstacles, best smasher of Dasyus, the light has been born, the smasher of lords, smasher of rivals.
3. Here is the fairest, the highest light of lights: the lofty one is called all-conquering, wealth-conquering.
   The all-blazing, greatly blazing Sun spreads his broad might, his unshakeable strength to be seen.
4. Flashing forth with your light, as the Sun you went to the luminous realm of heaven,
   you by whom all these worlds are supported here, you who accomplish all work, who possess all that is proper for gods.

X.171 (997) Indra

Iṭa Bhārgava
4 verses: gāyatrī

This brief hymn makes allusion to four unknown or little-known myths involving Indra, one per verse. All four verses begin with *t(u)vám* "you," and three of the four (not vs. 2) contain a vocative addressed to Indra—repetitions that provide some unity to a hymn made up of fragments.

1. You, Indra—you furthered this chariot of Iṭat the presser.
   You heard the call of the one who has soma.
2. You pulled the head of the raging Battler off from his skin.
   You went to the house of the one who has soma.
3. You, Indra—this mortal Venya
   you made slack in an instant, for Āstrabudhna, who had it in mind.
4. You, Indra—set this sun in front, though it is behind,
   even athwart the will of the gods.

X.172 (998) Dawn

Saṃvarta Āṅgirasa
4 verses: dvipadā virāj

Although the Anukramaṇī identifies the divinity of this hymn as Dawn, only the last verse (4) clearly belongs to her, and, at least in verse 2, the masculine adjectives preclude Dawn as subject. Commentators have suggested other deities: Dawn (vs. 1), Sūrya (vs. 2), Agni (vs. 3), Dawn (vs. 4), or Sūrya (vss. 1–3). These particular identifications cannot be confirmed, but it *is* clear that this is a hymn appropriate to early morning. In verse 2 the subject awakens mortals. Though verse 1 is less clear, the cows there are on the move after giving milk (in our interpretation): as real cows, they are going to pasture after the morning milking; as dawn cows they are following the track of the sun out of the east and across the sky, having filled the sky with their milky light. In the third verse the sacrifice is begun, as is appropriate at dawn. And finally in verse 4 Dawn makes an explicit appearance upon her birth.

1. Drive here along with your longing. The cows follow your track, when (they have given milk) with their udders.
2. Drive here with good insight, as the most bounteous one, along with those of good gifts, as you awaken the bountiful while aging the combatants.
3. Like those bringing food, having good gifts we lay out the thread (of sacrifice): let us perform sacrifice.
4. Dawn (rolls) out of the way the darkness of her sister (Night), rolls her track up in a ball, because she has been well born (just now).

X.173 (999) Praise of the King (Royal Consecration)

Dhruva Āṅgirasa
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn has long been seen as part of a royal consecration (Rājasūya, a term first found in the Atharvaveda), whatever that rite would have looked like in late Ṛgvedic times. The keyword of the hymn is *dhruvá* "firm"—firmness being the quality most desired in the royal candidate—and in fact the Anukramaṇī has extracted this word for the name of the poet. The affirmation of the chosen king by both the human clans (*viś*, vss. 1, 6) and various gods is required. Among the gods we find Indra, the archetypal warrior king (vss. 2, 5–6), and Varuṇa, the archetypal peacetime king (vs. 5). (For these two aspects of kingship, divided between the two gods, see especially IV.42.) In addition there are the ritually connected gods, who would officiate at the consecration ceremony: Brahmaṇaspati (vs. 3)/Bṛhaspati (vs. 5), who represent the verbal portion, and Agni (vs. 5) and Soma (vs. 3), who participate in the physical portion. Soma, as ritual substance, is found in verse 6, which effects the king's installation. The hymn has parallels in both recensions of the Atharvaveda, and elsewhere in Vedic literature.

1. I have brought you here: be among (us). Stand firm, without wavering.
   Let all the clans want you. Let kingship not fall away from you.
2. Be only here; do not budge—unwavering like a mountain.
   Like Indra, stand firm here; here uphold your kingship.
3. This one here has Indra upheld—firm with a firm oblation.
   For him Soma will bear witness; for him Brahmaṇaspati.
4. Firm is heaven, firm the earth, firm these mountains here.
   Firm all this animate world, firm right here this king of the clans.
5. Firm let King Varuṇa, firm let God Bṛhaspati,
   firm let both Indra and Agni uphold your kingship—firm!
6. We touch firm soma with a firm oblation.
   And now Indra will make the clans bring tribute only to you.

X.174 (1000) Praise of the King

Abhīvarta Āṅgirasa
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

A companion piece to the preceding consecration hymn, but one that focuses only on the combative and confrontational aspects of kingship. Here the signature idiom is *abhí-√vṛt* "roll over," again providing the Anukramaṇī's poet's name. The king's ability to "roll over" and crush his opponents as Indra did, leaving him the only one standing, is celebrated and ritually effected with an oblation named with the idiom and associated with Indra (vss. 1, 4).

1. The Over-rolling oblation with which Indra rolled over (his enemies),
   with that, o Brahmaṇaspati, make us roll to kingship.
2. Having rolled over the rivals, over those who are hostile to us,
   stand over the one who gives battle, over the one who is envious of us.
3. God Savitar has made you—Soma has made you roll over—
   made you roll over all creatures, so that you will be an Over-roller.
4. The oblation through which Indra, when he performed it, became the
   highest brilliant one,
   that (oblation) I have now performed, o gods: I have therefore become
   without rivals.
5. Without rivals, rival-smiting, (rolling) to kingship, widely victorious—
   so that I will rule widely over these creatures and over the people.

X.175 (1001) Pressing Stones

Ūrdhvagrāvan Āṅgirasa
4 verses: gāyatrī

This third hymn to the pressing stones (the others being X.76 and X.94) has none of the rhetorical ambition or vividness of the other two. It begins and ends (vss. 1, 4) with an appeal to the god Savitar, literally "the Impeller," to provide the impulsion to set the stones to pressing.

1. Let god Savitar propel you forth according to his ordinance, o pressing
   stones.
   Yoke yourselves to the chariot-poles. Press!
2. O pressing stones, ward off misfortune, off ill-will.
   Make the ruddy ones [=soma plants] into a remedy.
3. The pressing stones joined in fellowship display their greatness on the
   lower (stones),
   providing bullish power to the bull.
4. O pressing stones, let god Savitar now propel you according to ordinance
   for the sacrificer who presses (soma).

X.176 (1002) Agni [or, according to the Anukramaṇī, Ṛbhus (1), Agni (2–4)]

Sūnu Ārbhava
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 2

A simple hymn treating the ritual fire on its first appearance. The only real difficulty is found in verse 4. Although the precise meaning of the first hemistich is disputed, it seems to these readers that this verse almost paradoxically frees Agni from his birth as a god in order to situate him firmly in the mortal sphere, where human life takes place: the theme of Agni's "dual citizenship" is a common one in the Ṛgveda.

1. The sons of the Ṛbhus [=flames], their circles, bellow out loftily—
   they who, deriving all nourishment, feed upon (heaven and) earth as if
   on a mother cow.
2. Bring forward the god Jātavedas with a godly insight.
   He will convey our oblations in their proper order.
3. This Hotar right here, seeking the gods, is led forth to sacrifice.
   Decked out like the chariot of a traveler, he comes into view, glowing
   with heat, in his own person.
4. This Agni delivers himself from his immortal birth, as it were.
   Stronger even than strength, the god was created for living.

X.177 (1003) Pataṃga

Pataṃga Prājāpatya
3 verses: jagatī 1, triṣṭubh 2–3

An enigmatic hymn, mystically representing inspired poetic thought and visionary knowledge as a bird, clothed in light, seen inwardly by enlightened poets and

priests. The images, though not always clear, echo many found in similarly mystical treatments of poetic inspiration, such as the famous Vena hymn (X.123), and make a powerful impression.

1. The bird, anointed with the magic power of the lord, do those attentive to poetic inspiration see with heart and mind.
   The sage poets espy it within the sea; the ritual experts seek the footprint of the light beams.
2. The bird carries speech by mind. The Gandharva spoke it within the womb.
   The sage poets protect the flashing, reverberating inspired thought in the footprint of truth.
3. I saw the cowherd who never settles down, roaming back and forth along the paths.
   Clothing himself in those that (alternately) converge and diverge [=light beams?], he keeps rolling along within the living worlds.

X.178 (1004) Tārkṣya

Ariṣṭanemi Tārkṣya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

A being named Tārkṣya is found in a few other places in Vedic literature, with varying identities. Here it seems to be the name of a prodigious and mythical racehorse, much like Dadhikrā(van) (see IV.38–40); indeed verse 3 here is a variant of the Dadhikrā verse IV.38.10. Both horses are associated with Trasadasyu, leader of the Pūrus: his association with Dadhikrā is announced directly in the first Dadhikrā verse (IV.38.1), whereas his association with Tārkṣya is mediated through the horse's name, which is a vṛddhi derivative of Tṛkṣi, himself a descendant of Trasadasyu (see VIII.22.7, see also VI.46.8).

1. This god-sped prizewinner, victorious overtaker of (other) chariots,
   him whose wheel-felly cannot be damaged, the swift one driving to battle—Tārkṣya would we summon here for our well-being.
2. Summoning his generosity again and again, like that of Indra, we would board him like a boat for our well-being.
   O you two who are broad like the two wide (worlds), voluminous and deep—let us not suffer harm of you in our coming nor in our going.
3. Who just in a single day stretches across the five peoples with his vast power, like the sun across the waters with his light,
   his is the charge that wins thousands, that wins hundreds. They do not block him, anymore than a youthful arrow.

X.179 (1005) Indra

Śibi Auśīnara (1), Pratardana Daivodāsi (2), Vasumanas Rauhidaśva (3)
3 verses: anuṣṭubh 1, triṣṭubh 2–3

This hymn is later used for the dadhi-gharma (sour milk and hot milk) oblation at the midday libation associated with the Pravargya ritual, and indeed, unlike many Ṛgvedic passages pressed into service in middle Vedic śrauta rituals, it seems to have been composed for just this purpose. The first verse invites the priests to assess the readiness of the libation; the second and third verses, later the Puro'nuvākyā and Yājyā respectively, invite Indra to the midday service and offer him the cooked portion, clearly identified in verse 3c.

1. Stand up, (you priests)! Look down on Indra's portion which is due.
   If it is cooked, pour it! If it is uncooked, wait!
2. The oblation is (now) cooked. Indra, fare forth here; the sun has arrived at the middle of its road.
   Your comrades await you with servings (of food), as a housekeeper awaits the master of the barnyard who is making his rounds.
3. (The oblation) in the udder is cooked, I think, and the one in the fire is cooked. Well cooked, I think, is also this newer truth [=hymn].
   O mace-bearing Indra, you who do many deeds—drink of the sour milk of the Midday Pressing, taking enjoyment of it.

X.180 (1006) Indra

Jaya Aindri
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Indra's victories over his (and our) enemies are the special focus of this hymn, but the poet does not fail to mention our interest in his gifts as well (vs. 1).

1. O much-summoned one, you have vanquished your rivals. Your tempestuous power is preeminent. Now let your giving be here:
   Indra, bring good things here along with the priestly gift. You are the master of rich rivers.
2. Like a fearsome wild beast, living in the mountains and roaming wherever it wants, you have come here from the farther distance.
   Having honed sharp your fang and your wheel-rim, Indra, carve apart your rivals. Shove aside the scornful.
3. Indra, you were born to dominion and to might worth winning, you bull of the settled domains.
   You drove away the people that are not allies. You made a wide wide-place for the gods.

X.181 (1007) All Gods

Pratha Vāsiṣṭha (1), Sapratha Bhāradvāja (2), Gharma Saurya (3)
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Like X.179 this hymn is tightly tied to the Pravargya ritual—in this case celebrating the great sāmans associated with that ritual, the Rathantara and the Bṛhat, and the gharma, the hot milk offering that is its high point.

1. Whose name is "Spread" and "Wide-spread," which is the oblation of the oblation in anuṣṭubh meter:
   from the flashing Founder and from Savitar and Viṣṇu has Vasiṣṭha carried here the Rathaṃtara.
2. They found what was placed beyond, what was the highest hidden domain of the sacrifice:
   from the flashing Founder and from Savitar and Viṣṇu, from Agni, has Bharadvāja brought here the Bṛhat.
3. They found, as they reflected with their mind, the yajus that sprang forth first, going the way of the gods:
   from the flashing Founder and from Savitar and Viṣṇu, from the sun, have they carried here the hot milk (gharma).

X.182 (1008) Bṛhaspati

Tapurmūrdhan Bārhaspatya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Bṛhaspati, the master of ritual speech, is called upon to aid our speech, but also to punish all forms of evil speech and their speakers.

1. Let Bṛhaspati lead (our thought) across the difficult depths, but for the utterer of evil he will lead his thought back (against him).
   – He hurls aside malediction and smites away ill-will; then he will create luck and life for the sacrificer.
2. Let Narāśaṃsa help us at the Fore-offering; let the After-offering be luck for us at the invocations.
   – He hurls aside malediction and smites away ill-will; then he will create luck and life for the sacrificer.
3. Let him of scorching head scorch those who are demons; those who hate the sacred formulation are for his arrow to smite.
   – He hurls aside malediction and smites away ill-will; then he will create luck and life for the sacrificer.

X.183 (1009) For the Birth of a Son [To the Sacrificer (1), the Sacrificer's Wife (2), and the Hotar (3)]

Prajāvat Prājāpatya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

The first two verses present a fragment of dialogue, with patterned repetition, between a wife and a husband, preparatory to attempting to conceive a son. As Geldner points out, the situation seems to be similar to that depicted in I.179 (the Agastya–Lopāmudrā dialogue), with the husband ending a period of asceticism (see vs. 1b) and the wife eager for sex and its product, children. It thus conforms to the pattern common throughout Indian literature of the reluctant ascetic and the sexually aggressive female (see Jamison 1996a: 15–17 and passim), but in the short exchange here the husband seems more amenable than usual, and the rhetorical responsions between the two verses make the pair seem more attuned to each other. The final verse (3) is spoken by an unidentified spirit responsible for all sorts of fertility, who promises sons.

1. [Wife:] I saw you with my mind, as you became ever more cognizant with yours, you born from fervor, developed from fervor.
   Bestowing progeny here, wealth here, progenerate yourself with progeny, o you who desire sons.
2. [Husband:] I saw you with my mind, as you became ever more intent with yours, being in distress in your own body at your period.
   Up here, near to me. You should become a young woman (again).
   Progenerate yourself with progeny, o you lady desiring sons.
3. I placed the embryo in the plants, I within all creatures.
   I generated progeny on earth, I (will generate) sons for wives in the future.

X.184 (1010) Pregnancy/Birth Charm [To Assorted Divinities]

Tvaṣṭar Garbhakartar or Viṣṇu Prājāpatya
3 verses: anuṣṭubh

This little charm follows naturally on the immediately preceding hymn. There a married couple prepares to have sex in order to conceive; here a range of gods and goddesses responsible for conception and safe pregnancy are called upon to ensure conception followed by a full-term birth.

1. Let Viṣṇu arrange the womb; let Tvaṣṭar carve the forms.
   Let Prajāpati pour out (the semen); let the Placer place the embryo in you.

2. Place the embryo, Sinīvālī; place the embryo, Sarasvatī.
   Let the Aśvins, the two lotus-garlanded gods, place the embryo for you.
3. The one that the Aśvins churned out of the two golden kindling sticks,
   that embryo of yours we call, to be born in the tenth month.

X.185 (1011) Aditi

Satyadhṛti Vāruṇi
3 verses: gāyatrī

This brief appeal for the help of the three most prominent Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, may have been placed here, after the two pregnancy charms, because it mentions their mother Aditi (vs. 3), whose prodigious pregnancies were legendary. Certainly the Anukramaṇī seems to have concluded something of the sort, since it identifies the divinity of the hymn as Aditi, though she appears only obliquely.

1. Great be the heavenly help of the three—of Mitra, of Aryaman,
   of Varuṇa—help difficult to assail.
2. For neither at home nor on wild ways
   does an evil-speaking cheater hold sway over them—
3. For whom the sons of Aditi hold forth inexhaustible light,
   for the mortal to live.

X.186 (1012) Vāyu

Ula Vātāyana
3 verses: gāyatrī

As with X.168, although the Anukramaṇī identifies the divinity of this hymn as Vāyu, he is only called Vāta "Wind" here. He is credited with the ability to provide healing (vs. 1) and, in all three verses, to keep us alive and prolong our lifetimes. This strong association between life and the wind must be mediated through the latter's identification (*bandhu*) with breath, although this identification is not made explicit in the hymn.

1. Let the wind blow hither a remedy, which is luck itself, joy itself, for
   our heart.
   He will lengthen our lifetimes.
2. O Wind, you are father to us, and brother, and comrade to us.
   Make us live.
3. What deposit of immortality has been deposited yonder in your house,
   o Wind,
   give us of that for us to live.

X.187 (1013) Agni

Vatsa Āgneya
5 verses: gāyatrī

Found in AVŚ VI.34, this unremarkable hymn contains a refrain that suggests the militant Agni, but only verse 3 develops this theme.

1. Rouse forth speech for Agni, for the bull of the settlements.
   He will carry us across hatreds.
2. Who from the distant distance shines across the wastelands,
   he will carry us across hatreds.
3. Who grinds down the demonic forces, the bull with flaming flame,
   he will carry us across hatreds.
4. Who looks at all creatures separately and sees them whole,
   he will carry us across hatreds.
5. Who on the far shore of this airy realm was born as flaming Agni,
   he will carry us across hatreds.

X.188 (1014) Agni Jātavedas

Śyena Āgneya
3 verses: gāyatrī

Another slight hymn to Agni, this time with his common epithet Jātavedas. The focus of this hymn is the sacrifice and Agni's role in it.

1. Spur forth now Jātavedas, the prizewinning horse,
   to sit here on this ritual grass of ours.
2. For this Jātavedas here, whose heroes are poets, who grants rewards,
   I rouse forth a great praise hymn.
3. The bright beams of Jātavedas that convey the oblation among the gods,
   with them let him impel our sacrifice.

X.189 (1015) Sārparājñī or Sūrya

Sārparājñī
3 verses: gāyatrī

The Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn either to Sūrya or to the shadowy figure Sārparājñī ([female] descendant of the Queen of the Snakes), who is also said to be its author. The former identification seems far more likely, or, rather, the hymn appears to be set at the dawn sacrifice and to play with the various sources of light

that compete and combine at that time: the sun and the ritual fire, as well as Dawn (vs. 2ab). The fire, and in part its counterpart the sun, is portrayed as a variety of animals: a (male) cow (vs. 1), a buffalo (vs. 2), and a bird. The association of speech with the bird is also found in the Pataṃga hymn (X.177) and probably reflects the importance of ritual speech at the dawn sacrifice. There are no signs of snakes, much less their queen.

1. This dappled cow has stridden here and sat in front of its mother
   and its father, as it goes forth toward the sun.
2. She moves within the realms of light, breathing in from his
   breathing-out.
   The buffalo has looked out across heaven.
3. He shines [/rules] over the thirty domains. Speech is established for
   the bird
   at each dawn and throughout the days.

X.190 (1016) Bhāvavṛttam ("Cosmogonic")

Aghamarṣaṇa Mādhuchandasa
3 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn presents a cosmogony with *tápas* "ascetic heat, fervor" as the ultimate origin of everything. The entities created and the order and source of their creation are curious and thought-provoking, but unlike the famous cosmogonic hymn X.129, there are no puzzles to decode.

1. Both truth and reality were born from heat when it was kindled.
   From that, night was born, and from that the undulating sea.
2. From the undulating sea was born the year,
   which distributes the days and nights and exerts its will over everyone
   who blinks [=mortals].
3. The Ordainer arranged, according to their proper order, sun and moon,
   heaven and earth, midspace and sunlight.

X.191 (1017) Agni (1), Unity (2–4)

Saṃvanana Āṅgirasa
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 3

This last hymn in the Ṛgveda has a programmatic and propagandistic agenda. The Ṛgveda Saṃhitā ("Collection") has assembled the poetic products of numerous separate clans, who also had their own cultic practices and who presumably coexisted in an uneasy vacillation between semi-hostility and wary cooperation. This hymn collection was produced under the new circumstances of a centralized (or centralizing) sociopolitical regime, generally considered to be the Kuru kings, which sought to impose (or encourage) a standardized, shared ritual culture—the Ṛgveda collection being its most enduring product—that would also support the political unification.

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with the ritual fire, which brings all the Ārya together, including those who don't seem to want it (1b), and is the most visible representation of the underlying unity of their ritual praxis. There's an implicit warning in this verse: the ritual fire itself will appropriate the goods of any hold-outs. Verse 2 then provides a positive model: like the gods, who put aside their differences to take their common shares in the sacrifice, we should make a common sacrifice (which, implicitly it is said, will make us more successful, once we no long have to compete among ourselves all the time). Verse 3 outlines the results of the program to devise a standardized ritual shared by all. The second half of this verse is a virtual speech act: the speaker performs the two fundamental components of the ritual—ritual speech (the mantra) and ritual action (the oblation)—thus by this announcement effectively creating the new, shared ritual. Verse 4 promises that the results will be worth the effort. For further discussion, see Proferes (2007: 11 and passim).

1. Over and over, o Agni, you bull, you wrest together all things from the
   stranger.
   You are kindled in the footprint of refreshment. Bring goods here to us.
2. Come together, speak together; together let your thoughts agree,
   just as the gods of long ago, coming to an agreement together, reverently
   approach their sacrificial portion.
3. Common to them all is the solemn utterance, common the assembly,
   common their thought along with their perception.
   I (hereby) utter an utterance common to you all on your behalf; with an
   oblation common to you all I offer on your behalf.
4. Common is your purpose; common your hearts;
   let your thought be common, so that it will go well for you together.

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DEITIES AND POETS OF THE ṚGVEDA, FOLLOWING THE ANUKRAMAṆĪ

Maṇḍala I

I.1	Agni	Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
I.2	Vāyu (1–3), Indra and Vāyu (4–6), Mitra and Varuṇa (7–9)	——
I.3	Aśvins (1–3), Indra (4–6), All Gods (7–9), Sarasvatī (10–12)	——
I.4	Indra	——
I.5	——	——
I.6	Indra (1–3, 10), Maruts (4, 6, 8, 9), Maruts and Indra (5, 7)	——
I.7	Indra	——
I.8	——	——
I.9	——	——
I.10	——	——
I.11	——	Jetar Mādhuchandasa
I.12	Agni	Medhātithi Kāṇva
I.13	Āprī	——
I.14	All Gods	——
I.15	Sequential Deities	——
I.16	Indra	——
I.17	Indra and Varuṇa	——
I.18	Brahmaṇaspati (1–3), Brahmaṇaspati, Indra, and Soma (4), the Same with Dakṣiṇā (5), Sadaspati (6–8), Sadaspati or Narāśaṃsa (9)	——
I.19	Agni and the Maruts	——
I.20	Ṛbhus	——
I.21	Indra and Agni	——
I.22	Aśvins (1–4), Savitar (5–8), Agni (9–10), Gods (11), Indrāṇi, Varuṇānī, Agnāyī (12), Heaven and Earth (13–14), Earth (15), Viṣṇu or Gods (16), Viṣṇu (17–21)	——
I.23	Vāyu (1), Indra and Vāyu (2–3), Mitra and Varuṇa (4–6), Indra Marutvant (7–9), All Gods (10–12), Pūṣan (13–15), Waters (16–23ab), Agni (23cd–24)	——
I.24	Ka (1), Agni (2), Savitar (3–4), Savitar or Bhaga (5), Varuṇa (6–10)	Śunahśepa Ājīgarti
I.25	Varuṇa	——
I.26	Agni	——
I.27	Agni (1–12), Gods (13)	——
I.28	Indra (1–4), the Mortar (5–6), the Mortar and Pestle (7–8), Prajāpati Hariścandra or the Soma-Pressing Hide (9)	——

I.29	Indra	Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
I.30	Indra (1–16), Aśvins (17–19), Dawn (20–22)	———
I.31	Agni	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
I.32	Indra	———
I.33	———	———
I.34	Aśvins	———
I.35	Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa, Rātrī, and Savitar (1), Savitar (2–11)	———
I.36	Agni	Kaṇva Ghaura
I.37	Maruts	———
I.38	———	———
I.39	———	———
I.40	Brahmaṇaspati	———
I.41	Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman (1–3, 7–9), Ādityas (4–6)	———
I.42	Pūṣan	———
I.43	Rudra (1–2, 4–6), Rudra, Mitra and Varuṇa (3), Soma (7–9)	———
I.44	Agni, Aśvins, Dawn (1–2), Agni (3–14)	Praskaṇva Kāṇva
I.45	Agni (1–10ab), Gods (10cd)	———
I.46	Aśvins	———
I.47	———	———
I.48	Dawn	———
I.49	———	———
I.50	Sūrya (1–9), spell against disease (10–13)	———
I.51	Indra	Savya Āṅgirasa
I.52	———	———
I.53	———	———
I.54	———	———
I.55	———	———
I.56	———	———
I.57	———	———
I.58	Agni	Nodhas Gautama
I.59	Agni Vaiśvānara	———
I.60	Agni	———
I.61	Indra	———
I.62	———	———
I.63	———	———
I.64	Maruts	———
I.65	Agni	Parāśara Śāktya
I.66	———	———
I.67	———	———
I.68	———	———
I.69	———	———
I.70	———	———
I.71	———	———
I.72	———	———
I.73	———	———
I.74	———	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
I.75	———	———
I.76	———	———
I.77	———	———
I.78	———	———
I.79	———	———
I.80	Indra	———

I.81	Indra	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
I.82	———	———
I.83	———	———
I.84	———	———
I.85	Maruts	———
I.86	———	———
I.87	———	———
I.88	———	———
I.89	All Gods	———
I.90	———	———
I.91	Soma	———
I.92	Dawn (1–15), Aśvins (16–18)	———
I.93	Agni and Soma	———
I.94	Agni	Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.95	Agni or Agni Auṣasa	———
I.96	Agni or Agni Draviṇodā	———
I.97	Agni or Agni Śuci	———
I.98	Agni or Agni Vaiśvānara	———
I.99	Agni or Agni Jātavedas	Kaśyapa Mārīca
I.100	Indra	Five Vārṣāgira poets: Ṛjrāśva, Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhayamāna, and Surādhas
I.101	———	Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.102	———	———
I.103	———	———
I.104	———	———
I.105	All Gods	Trita Āptya or Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.106	———	Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.107	———	———
I.108	Indra and Agni	———
I.109	———	———
I.110	Ṛbhus	———
I.111	———	———
I.112	Heaven and Earth (1a), Agni (1b), Aśvins (1cd–25)	———
I.113	Dawn (1ab, 2–20), Dawn and Night (1cd)	———
I.114	Rudra	———
I.115	Sūrya	———
I.116	Aśvins	Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
I.117	———	———
I.118	———	———
I.119	———	———
I.120	———	———
I.121	Indra or All Gods	———
I.122	All Gods	———
I.123	Dawn	———
I.124	———	———
I.125	Svanaya's Dānastuti	———
I.126	Bhāvayavya (1–5, 7), Romaśā (6)	Kakṣīvant (1–5), Bhāvayavya (6), Romaśā (7)
I.127	Agni	Paruchepa Daivodāsi
I.128	———	———
I.129	Indra (1–5, 7–11), Indu (6)	———
I.130	Indra	———
I.131	———	———

I.132	Indra (1–5, 6defg), Indra and Parvata (6abc)	Paruchepa Daivodāsi
I.133	Indra	____
I.134	Vāyu	____
I.135	Vāyu (1–3, 9), Indra and Vāyu (4–8)	____
I.136	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–5), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (6–7)	____
I.137	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
I.138	Pūṣan	____
I.139	All Gods, or All Gods (1, 11), Mitra and Varuṇa (2), Aśvins (3–5), Indra (6) Agni (7), Maruts (8), Indra and Agni (9), Bṛhaspati (10)	____
I.140	Agni	Dīrghatamas Aucathya
I.141	____	____
I.142	Āprī (1–12), Indra (13)	____
I.143	Agni	____
I.144	____	____
I.145	____	____
I.146	____	____
I.147	____	____
I.148	____	____
I.149	____	____
I.150	____	____
I.151	Mitra (1), Mitra and Varuṇa (2–9)	____
I.152	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
I.153	____	____
I.154	Viṣṇu	____
I.155	Viṣṇu and Indra (1–3), Viṣṇu (4–6)	____
I.156	Viṣṇu	____
I.157	Aśvins	____
I.158	____	____
I.159	Heaven and Earth	____
I.160	____	____
I.161	Ṛbhus	____
I.162	Praise of a Horse	____
I.163	____	____
I.164	All Gods	____
I.165	Indra Marutvant	Indra (1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10–12), the Maruts (3, 5, 7, 9), and Agastya (13–15)
I.166	Maruts	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
I.167	Indra (1), Maruts (2–11)	____
I.168	Maruts	____
I.169	Indra	____
I.170	____	Indra (1, 3), Agastya (2, 5), Indra or Agastya (4)
I.171	Maruts (1–2), Indra Marutvant (3–6)	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
I.172	Maruts	____
I.173	Indra	____
I.174	____	____
I.175	____	____
I.176	____	____
I.177	____	____
I.178	____	____
I.179	Delight (Rati)	Lopāmudrā 1–2, Agastya 3–4, student 5–6
I.180	Aśvins	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi

I.181	Aśvins	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
I.182	____	____
I.183	____	____
I.184	____	____
I.185	Heaven and Earth	____
I.186	All Gods	____
I.187	Praise of Food	____
I.188	Āprī	____
I.189	Agni	____
I.190	Bṛhaspati	____
I.191	Against Poisonous Animals	____

Maṇḍala II

II.1	Agni	Gṛtsamada Bhārgava Śaunaka, originally Āṅgirasa Śaunahotra
II.2	____	____
II.3	Āprī	____
II.4	Agni	Somāhuti Bhārgava
II.5	____	____
II.6	____	____
II.7	____	____
II.8	____	Gṛtsamada
II.9	____	____
II.10	____	____
II.11	Indra	____
II.12	____	____
II.13	____	____
II.14	____	____
II.15	____	____
II.16	____	____
II.17	____	____
II.18	____	____
II.19	____	____
II.20	____	____
II.21	____	____
II.22	____	____
II.23	Bṛhaspati	____
II.24	____	____
II.25	Brahmaṇaspati	____
II.26	____	____
II.27	Ādityas	Gṛtsamada or Kūrma Gārtsamada
II.28	Varuṇa	____
II.29	All Gods	____
II.30	Indra (1–5, 7, 8cd, 10), Indra and Soma (6), Sarasvatī (8ab), Bṛhaspati (9), Maruts (11)	Gṛtsamada
II.31	All Gods	____
II.32	Various Gods	____
II.33	Rudra	____
II.34	Maruts	____
II.35	Apām Napāt	____
II.36	Sequential Deities	____
II.37	____	____
II.38	Savitar	____

II.39	Aśvins	Gṛtsamada
II.40	Soma and Pūṣan	———
II.41	Various Gods	———
II.42	Omen-Bird	———
II.43	———	———

Maṇḍala III

III.1	Agni	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.2	Agni Vaiśvānara	———
III.3	———	———
III.4	Āprī	———
III.5	Agni	———
III.6	———	———
III.7	———	———
III.8	Sacrificial Post(s)	———
III.9	Agni	———
III.10	———	———
III.11	———	———
III.12	Indra and Agni	———
III.13	Agni	Ṛṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
III.14	———	———
III.15	———	Utkīla Kātya
III.16	———	———
III.17	———	Kata Vaiśvāmitra
III.18	———	———
III.19	———	Gāthin Kauśika
III.20	All Gods (1, 5), Agni (2–4)	———
III.21	Agni	———
III.22	Purīṣya Agnis	———
III.23	Agni	Devaśravas Bhārata and Devavāta Bhārata
III.24	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.25	———	———
III.26	Agni Vaiśvānara	———
III.27	Agni	———
III.28	———	———
III.29	———	———
III.30	Indra	———
III.31	———	Kuśika Aiṣīrathi or Viśvāmitra
III.32	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.33	Rivers (1–3, 5, 9, 11–13), Viśvāmitra (4, 8, 10), and Indra (6–7)	Viśvāmitra (1–3, 5–6, 9, 11–13) and Rivers (4, 7–8, 10)
III.34	Indra	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.35	———	———
III.36	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina (1–9, 11) and Ghora Āṅgirasa (10)
III.37	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.38	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina or Prajāpati Vaiśvānara or Prajāpati Vācya
III.39	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.40	———	———
III.41	———	———
III.42	———	———
III.43	———	———
III.44	———	———

III.45	Indra	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.46	———	———
III.47	———	———
III.48	———	———
III.49	———	———
III.50	———	———
III.51	———	———
III.52	———	———
III.53	Indra and Parvata (1), Indra (2–14, 21–24), Vāc Sasarparī (15–16), Praise of Chariot Parts (17–20)	———
III.54	All Gods	Prajāpati Vaiśvānara or Prajāpati Vācya
III.55	———	———
III.56	———	———
III.57	———	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.58	Aśvins	———
III.59	Mitra	———
III.60	Ṛbhus (1–4), Ṛbhus and Indra (5–7)	———
III.61	Dawn	———
III.62	Indra and Varuṇa (1–3), Bṛhaspati (4–6), Pūṣan (7–9), Savitar (10–12), Soma (13–15), Mitra and Varuṇa (16–18)	Viśvāmitra Gāthina (1–15), Viśvāmitra or Jamadagni (16–18)

Maṇḍala IV

IV.1	Agni	Vāmadeva Gautama
IV.2	———	———
IV.3	———	———
IV.4	Agni Rakṣohan	———
IV.5	Agni Vaiśvānara	———
IV.6	Agni	———
IV.7	———	———
IV.8	———	———
IV.9	———	———
IV.10	———	———
IV.11	———	———
IV.12	———	———
IV.13	Agni or Liṅgoktadevatāḥ	———
IV.14	Agni	———
IV.15	Agni (1–6), Somaka Sāhadevya (7–8), Aśvins (9–10)	———
IV.16	Indra	———
IV.17	———	———
IV.18	———	———
IV.19	———	———
IV.20	———	———
IV.21	———	———
IV.22	———	———
IV.23	Indra (1–7, 11), Indra or Ṛta (8–10)	———
IV.24	Indra	———
IV.25	———	———
IV.26	Indra (1–3), Praise of Falcon (4–7)	———
IV.27	Praise of Falcon (1–4), Falcon or Indra (5)	———
IV.28	Indra, or Indra and Soma	———

IV.29	Indra	Vāmadeva Gautama
IV.30	Indra (1–8, 12–24), Indra and Dawn (9–11)	——
IV.31	Indra	——
IV.32	——	——
IV.33	Ṛbhus	——
IV.34	——	——
IV.35	——	——
IV.36	——	——
IV.37	——	——
IV.38	Heaven and Earth (1), Dadhikrā (2–10)	——
IV.39	Dadhikrā	——
IV.40	Dadhikrā (1–4), Sūrya (5)	——
IV.41	Indra and Varuṇa	——
IV.42	——	Trasadasyu Paurukutsya
IV.43	Aśvins	Purumīḷha Sauhotra and Ajamīḷha Sauhotra
IV.44	——	——
IV.45	——	Vāmadeva Gautama
IV.46	Vāyu (1), Vāyu and Indra (2–7)	——
IV.47	Vāyu (1), Vāyu and Indra (2–4)	——
IV.48	Vāyu	——
IV.49	Indra and Bṛhaspati	——
IV.50	Bṛhaspati (1–9), Bṛhaspati and Indra (10–11)	——
IV.51	Dawn	——
IV.52	——	——
IV.53	Savitar	——
IV.54	——	——
IV.55	All Gods	——
IV.56	Heaven and Earth	——
IV.57	Agricultural Divinities	——
IV.58	Praise of Ghee	——

Maṇḍala V

V.1	Agni	Budha Ātreya or Gaviṣṭhira Ātreya
V.2	——	Kumāra Ātreya or Vṛśa Jāna or both
V.3	——	Vasuśruta Ātreya
V.4	——	——
V.5	Āprī	——
V.6	Agni	——
V.7	——	Iṣa Ātreya
V.8	——	——
V.9	——	Gaya Ātreya
V.10	——	——
V.11	——	Sutambhara Ātreya
V.12	——	——
V.13	——	——
V.14	——	——
V.15	——	Dharuṇa Āṅgirasa
V.16	——	Pūru Ātreya
V.17	——	——
V.18	——	Mṛktavāhas Dvita Ātreya

V.19	Agni	Vavri Ātreya
V.20	——	Prayasvanta Ātreya
V.21	——	Sasa Ātreya
V.22	——	Viśvasāman Ātreya
V.23	——	Dyumna Viśvacarṣaṇi Ātreya
V.24	——	The Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas: Bandhu (1), Subandhu (2), Śrutabandhu (3), and Viprabandhu (4)
V.25	——	The Vasūyava Ātreyas
V.26	——	——
V.27	——	Kings Tryaruṇa Traivṛṣṇa, Trasadasyu Paurukutsya, and Aśvamedha Bhārata, or Atri Bhauma
V.28	——	Viśvavārā Ātreyī
V.29	Indra	Gaurivīti Śāktya
V.30	——	Babhru Ātreya
V.31	——	Avasyu Ātreya
V.32	——	Gātu Ātreya
V.33	——	Saṃvaraṇa Prājāpatya
V.34	——	——
V.35	——	Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
V.36	——	——
V.37	——	Atri Bhauma
V.38	——	——
V.39	——	——
V.40	Indra (1–4), Sūrya (5), Atri (6–9)	——
V.41	All Gods	——
V.42	——	——
V.43	——	——
V.44	——	Avatsāra Kāśyapa and others
V.45	——	Sadāpṛṇa Ātreya
V.46	——	Pratikṣatra Ātreya
V.47	——	Pratiratha Ātreya
V.48	——	Pratibhānu Ātreya
V.49	——	Pratibha Ātreya
V.50	——	Svastyātreya Ātreya
V.51	——	——
V.52	Maruts	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
V.53	——	——
V.54	——	——
V.55	——	——
V.56	——	——
V.57	——	——
V.58	——	——
V.59	——	——
V.60	——	——
V.61	——	——
V.62	Mitra and Varuṇa	Śrutavid Ātreya
V.63	——	Arcanānas Ātreya
V.64	——	——
V.65	——	Rātahavya Ātreya
V.66	——	——
V.67	——	Yajata Ātreya
V.68	——	——
V.69	——	Urucakri Ātreya

V.70	Mitra and Varuṇa	Urucakri Ātreya
V.71	———	Bāhuvṛkta Ātreya
V.72	———	———
V.73	Aśvins	Paura Ātreya
V.74	———	———
V.75	———	Avasyu Ātreya
V.76	———	Atri Bhauma
V.77	———	———
V.78	———	Saptavadhri Ātreya
V.79	Dawn	Satyaśravas Ātreya
V.80	———	———
V.81	Savitar	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
V.82	———	———
V.83	Parjanya	Atri Bhauma
V.84	Earth	———
V.85	Varuṇa	———
V.86	Indra and Agni	———
V.87	Maruts	Evayāmarut Ātreya

Maṇḍala VI

VI.1	Agni	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.2	———	———
VI.3	———	———
VI.4	———	———
VI.5	———	———
VI.6	———	———
VI.7	Agni Vaiśvānara	———
VI.8	———	———
VI.9	———	———
VI.10	Agni	———
VI.11	———	———
VI.12	———	———
VI.13	———	———
VI.14	———	———
VI.15	———	Vītahavya Āṅgirasa or Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.16	———	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.17	———	———
VI.18	———	———
VI.19	———	———
VI.20	———	———
VI.21	Indra (1–8, 10, 12), All Gods (9, 11)	———
VI.22	Indra	———
VI.23	———	———
VI.24	———	———
VI.25	———	———
VI.26	———	———
VI.27	———	———
VI.28	Cows (1–3, 7–8c) Indra (2, 8d)	———
VI.29	Indra	———
VI.30	———	———
VI.31	———	Suhotra Bhāradvāja
VI.32	———	———
VI.33	———	Śunahotra Bhāradvāja
VI.34	———	———

VI.35	Indra	Nara Bhāradvāja
VI.36	———	———
VI.37	———	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.38	———	———
VI.39	———	———
VI.40	———	———
VI.41	———	———
VI.42	———	———
VI.43	———	———
VI.44	———	Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
VI.45	Indra (1–30), Bṛbu Takṣan (31–33)	———
VI.46	Indra	———
VI.47	Soma (1–5), Indra (6–19, 20d, 21, 31cd), Gods (20a), Earth (20b), Bṛhaspati (20c), Prastoka Sārūjaya's Dānastuti (22–25), Chariot (26–28), Drum (29–31ab)	Garga Bhāradvāja
VI.48	Agni (1–10), Maruts (11–12, 20–21), Maruts or Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (13–15), Pūṣan (16–19), Maruts or Heaven and Earth or Pṛśni (22)	Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
VI.49	All Gods	Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
VI.50	———	———
VI.51	———	———
VI.52	———	———
VI.53	Pūṣan	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.54	———	———
VI.55	———	———
VI.56	———	———
VI.57	Indra and Pūṣan	———
VI.58	Pūṣan	———
VI.59	Indra and Agni	———
VI.60	———	———
VI.61	Sarasvatī	———
VI.62	Aśvins	———
VI.63	———	———
VI.64	Dawn	———
VI.65	———	———
VI.66	Maruts	———
VI.67	Mitra and Varuṇa	———
VI.68	Indra and Varuṇa	———
VI.69	Indra and Viṣṇu	———
VI.70	Heaven and Earth	———
VI.71	Savitar	———
VI.72	Indra and Soma	———
VI.73	Bṛhaspati	———
VI.74	Soma and Rudra	———
VI.75	Weapons	Pāyu Bhāradvāja

Maṇḍala VII

VII.1	Agni	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.2	Āprī	———
VII.3	Agni	———
VII.4	———	———
VII.5	Agni Vaiśvānara	———

VII.6	Agni Vaiśvānara	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.7	Agni	———
VII.8	———	———
VII.9	———	———
VII.10	———	———
VII.11	———	———
VII.12	———	———
VII.13	Agni Vaiśvānara	———
VII.14	Agni	———
VII.15	———	———
VII.16	———	———
VII.17	———	———
VII.18	Battle of the Ten Kings: Indra (1–21), Sudās Paijavana's Dānastuti (22–25)	———
VII.19	Indra	———
VII.20	———	———
VII.21	———	———
VII.22	———	———
VII.23	———	———
VII.24	———	———
VII.25	———	———
VII.26	———	———
VII.27	———	———
VII.28	———	———
VII.29	———	———
VII.30	———	———
VII.31	———	———
VII.32	———	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (1–25), Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (26ab), Vasiṣṭha or Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (26cd–27)
VII.33	Vasiṣṭha's Sons (1–9), Vasiṣṭha (10–14)	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (1–9), Vasiṣṭha's sons (10–14)
VII.34	All Gods (1–15, 17cd, 18–25), Ahi (16), Ahi Budhnya (17ab)	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.35	All Gods	———
VII.36	———	———
VII.37	———	———
VII.38	Savitar (1–5, 6ab), Savitar or Bhaga (6cd), Prizewinning Horses (7–8)	———
VII.39	All Gods	———
VII.40	———	———
VII.41	Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (1), Bhaga (2–6) Dawn (7)	———
VII.42	All Gods	———
VII.43	———	———
VII.44	Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (1), Dadhikrā (2–5)	———
VII.45	Savitar	———
VII.46	Rudra	———
VII.47	Waters	———
VII.48	Ṛbhus	———
VII.49	Waters	———
VII.50	Mitra and Varuṇa (1), Agni (2), All Gods (3), Rivers (4)	———
VII.51	Ādityas	———

VII.52	Ādityas	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.53	Heaven and Earth	———
VII.54	Vāstoṣpati	———
VII.55	Vāstoṣpati (1), Sleep Incantations (2–8)	———
VII.56	Maruts	———
VII.57	———	———
VII.58	———	———
VII.59	Maruts (1–11), Rudra (12)	———
VII.60	Sūrya (1), Mitra and Varuṇa (2–12)	———
VII.61	Mitra and Varuṇa	———
VII.62	Sūrya (1–3), Mitra and Varuṇa (4–6)	———
VII.63	Sūrya (1–5ab), Mitra and Varuṇa (5cd–6)	———
VII.64	Mitra and Varuṇa	———
VII.65	———	———
VII.66	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–3, 17–19), Ādityas (4–13), Sūrya (14–16)	———
VII.67	Aśvins	———
VII.68	———	———
VII.69	———	———
VII.70	———	———
VII.71	———	———
VII.72	———	———
VII.73	———	———
VII.74	———	———
VII.75	Dawn	———
VII.76	———	———
VII.77	———	———
VII.78	———	———
VII.79	———	———
VII.80	———	———
VII.81	———	———
VII.82	Indra and Varuṇa	———
VII.83	———	———
VII.84	———	———
VII.85	———	———
VII.86	Varuṇa	———
VII.87	———	———
VII.88	———	———
VII.89	———	———
VII.90	Vāyu (1–4), Indra and Vāyu (5–7)	———
VII.91	Vāyu (1, 3), Indra and Vāyu (2, 4–7)	———
VII.92	Vāyu (1, 3–5), Indra and Vāyu (2)	———
VII.93	Indra and Agni	———
VII.94	———	———
VII.95	Sarasvatī (1–2, 4–6), Sarasvant (3)	———
VII.96	Sarasvatī (1–3), Sarasvant (4–6)	———
VII.97	Indra (1), Bṛhaspati (2, 4–8), Indra and Brahmaṇaspati (3, 9), Indra and Bṛhaspati (10)	———
VII.98	Indra (1–6), Indra and Bṛhaspati (7)	———
VII.99	Viṣṇu (1–3, 7), Indra and Viṣṇu (4–6)	———
VII.100	Viṣṇu	———
VII.101	Parjanya	Kumara Āgneya or Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.102	———	———

VII.103	Frogs	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.104	Destroying Demons, Using Imprecations and Curses: Indra and Soma (1–7, 15, 25), Indra (8, 16, 19–22, 24), Soma (9, 12–13), Agni (10, 14), Gods (11), Pressing Stones (17) Maruts (18), Vasiṣṭha's Hopes for Himself (23ab), Earth and Midspace (23cd)	——

Maṇḍala VIII

VIII.1	Indra (1–29), Dānastuti of Āsaṅga (30–33), Āsaṅga (34)	Pragātha Kāṇva (formerly Pragātha Ghaura, brother and adoptive son of Kaṇva, 1–2), Medhātithi and Medhyātithi Kāṇva (3–29), Āsaṅga Plāyogi (30–33), Śaśvatī Āṅgirasī, wife of Āsaṅga (34)
VIII.2	Indra (1–40), Vibindhu's Dānastuti (41–42)	Medhātithi Kāṇva and Priyamedha Āṅgirasa (1–40), Medhātithi Kāṇva (41–42)
VIII.3	Indra (1–20), Pākasthāman Kaurayāṇa's Dānastuti (21–24)	Medhyātithi Kāṇva
VIII.4	Indra (1–14), Indra or Pūṣan (15–18) Kuruṅga's Dānastuti (19–21)	Devātithi Kāṇva
VIII.5	Aśvins	Brahmātithi Kāṇva
VIII.6	Indra (1–45), Tirindira Pārśavya's Dānastuti (46–48)	Vatsa Kāṇva
VIII.7	Maruts	Punarvatsa Kāṇva
VIII.8	Aśvins	Sadhvaṃsa Kāṇva
VIII.9	——	Śaśakarṇa Kāṇva
VIII.10	——	Pragātha Kāṇva
VIII.11	Agni	Vatsa Kāṇva
VIII.12	Indra	Parvata Kāṇva
VIII.13	——	Nārada Kāṇva
VIII.14	——	Goṣūktin Kāṇvāyana and Aśvasūktin Kāṇvāyana
VIII.15	——	——
VIII.16	——	Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
VIII.17	——	——
VIII.18	Ādityas	——
VIII.19	Agni (1–33), Ādityas (34–35), Trasadasyu's Dānastuti (36–37)	Sobhari Kāṇva
VIII.20	Maruts	——
VIII.21	Indra (1–16), Citra's Dānastuti (17–18)	——
VIII.22	Aśvins	——
VIII.23	Agni	Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
VIII.24	Indra	——
VIII.25	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–9, 13–24) and the All Gods (10–12)	——
VIII.26	Aśvins (1–19), Vāyu (20–25)	Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva or Vyaśva Āṅgirasa

VIII.27	All Gods	Manu Vaivasvata
VIII.28	——	——
VIII.29	——	Manu Vaivasvata or Kaśyapa Mārīca
VIII.30	——	Manu Vaivasvata
VIII.31	Yajamāna and Patnī [Praise of the Offering and Laud of the Sacrificer (1–4), Household (5–9), Blessing for the Household Pair (10–18)]	——
VIII.32	Indra	Medhātithi Kāṇva
VIII.33	——	Medhyātithi Kāṇva
VIII.34	——	Nīpātithi Kāṇva (1–15), the thousand ṛṣis of Vasurocis Āṅgirasa (16–18)
VIII.35	Aśvins	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
VIII.36	Indra	——
VIII.37	——	——
VIII.38	Indra and Agni	——
VIII.39	Agni	Nābhāka Kāṇva
VIII.40	Indra and Agni	——
VIII.41	Varuṇa	——
VIII.42	Varuṇa (1–3), Aśvins (4–6)	Arcanānas or Nābhāka Kāṇva
VIII.43	Agni	Virūpa Āṅgirasa
VIII.44	——	——
VIII.45	Agni and Indra (1), Indra (2–42)	Triśoka Kāṇva
VIII.46	Indra (1–20), Pṛthuśravas Kānīta's Dānastuti (21–24), Vāyu (25–28), Dānastuti (29–33)	Vaśa Aśvya
VIII.47	Ādityas	Trita Āptya
VIII.48	Soma	Pragātha Kāṇva
VIII.49	Indra	Praskaṇva Kāṇva
VIII.50	——	Puṣṭigu Kāṇva
VIII.51	——	Śruṣṭigu Kāṇva
VIII.52	——	Āyu Kāṇva
VIII.53	——	Medhya Kāṇva
VIII.54	Indra (1–2, 5–8), All Gods (3–4)	Mātariśvan Kāṇva
VIII.55	Praskaṇva's Dānastuti	Kṛśa Kāṇva
VIII.56	Praskaṇva's Dānastuti (1–4), Agni and Sūrya (5)	Pṛṣadhra Kāṇva
VIII.57	Aśvins	Medhya Kāṇva
VIII.58	(Fragment)	(No attribution)
VIII.59	Indra and Varuṇa	Suparṇa Kāṇva
VIII.60	Agni	Bharga Prāgatha
VIII.61	Indra	——
VIII.62	——	Pragātha Kāṇva
VIII.63	Indra (1–11), Gods (12)	——
VIII.64	Indra	——
VIII.65	——	——
VIII.66	——	Kali Prāgātha
VIII.67	Ādityas	Matsya Sāmmada or Māṇya Maitrāvaruṇi or many fish caught in a net
VIII.68	Indra (1–13), Dānastuti of Ṛkṣa and Āśvamedha (14–19)	Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
VIII.69	Indra (1–10, 13–18), All Gods (11ab), Varuṇa (11cd–12)	——

VIII.70	Indra	Puruhanman Āṅgirasa
VIII.71	Agni	Sudīti Āṅgirasa and/or Purumīḷha Āṅgirasa
VIII.72	Agni or Praise of Oblations	Haryata Prāgātha
VIII.73	Aśvins	Gopavana Ātreya or Saptavadhri Ātreya
VIII.74	Agni (1–12), Śrutarvan Ārkṣya's Dānastuti (13–15)	Gopavana Ātreya
VIII.75	Agni	Virupa Āṅgirasa
VIII.76	Indra	Kurusuti Kāṇva
VIII.77	____	____
VIII.78	____	____
VIII.79	Soma	Kṛtnu Bhārgava
VIII.80	Indra (1–9), Gods (10)	Ekadyū Naudhasa
VIII.81	Indra	Kusīdin Kāṇva
VIII.82	____	____
VIII.83	All Gods	____
VIII.84	Agni	Uśanas Kāvya
VIII.85	Aśvins	Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
VIII.86	____	Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa or Viśvaka Kārṣṇi
VIII.87	____	Dyumnīka Vāsiṣṭha or Priyamedha Āṅgirasa or Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
VIII.88	Indra	Nodhas Gautama
VIII.89	____	Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa and Purumedha Āṅgirasa
VIII.90	____	____
VIII.91	____	Apālā Ātreyī
VIII.92	____	Śrutakakṣa Āṅgirasa or Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
VIII.93	Indra (1–33), Indra and the Ṛbhus (34)	Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
VIII.94	Maruts	Bindu Āṅgirasa or Pūtadakṣa Āṅgirasa
VIII.95	Indra	Tiraścī Āṅgirasa
VIII.96	Indra (1–14c), Maruts (14d), Indra and Bṛhaspati (15)	Tiraścī Āṅgirasa or Dyutāna Āṅgirasa
VIII.97	Indra	Rebha Kāśyapa
VIII.98	____	Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
VIII.99	____	____
VIII.100	Indra (1–9, 12), Vāc (10–11)	Nema Bhārgava (1–3, 6–12), Indra (4–5)
VIII.101	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–5c), Ādityas (5d–6), Aśvins (7–8), Vāyu (9–10), Sūrya (11–12), Dawn or Praise of the Sun's Radiance (13), Pavamāna (14), Cow (15–16)	Jamadagni Bhārgava
VIII.102	Agni	Prayoga Bhārgava or Agni Pāvaka Bārhaspatya or Agni Gṛhapati Sahasaḥ Sūnu and Agni Yaviṣṭha Sahasaḥ Sūnu (together or one or the other)
VIII.103	Agni (1–13), Agni and the Maruts (14)	Sobhari Kāṇva

Maṇḍala IX

IX.1	Soma Pavamāna	Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
IX.2	____	Medhātithi Kāṇva
IX.3	Soma Pavamāna	Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
IX.4	____	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
IX.5	Āprī	Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
IX.6	Soma Pavamāna	____
IX.7	____	____
IX.8	____	____
IX.9	____	____
IX.10	____	____
IX.11	____	____
IX.12	____	____
IX.13	____	____
IX.14	____	____
IX.15	____	____
IX.16	____	____
IX.17	____	____
IX.18	____	____
IX.19	____	____
IX.20	____	____
IX.21	____	____
IX.22	____	____
IX.23	____	____
IX.24	____	____
IX.25	____	Dṛḍhacyuta Āgastya
IX.26	____	Idhmavāha Dārḍhacyuta
IX.27	____	Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
IX.28	____	Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
IX.29	____	Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
IX.30	____	Bindu Āṅgirasa
IX.31	____	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
IX.32	____	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
IX.33	____	Trita Āptya
IX.34	____	____
IX.35	____	Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
IX.36	____	____
IX.37	____	Rahūgaṇa Āṅgirasa
IX.38	____	____
IX.39	____	Bṛhanmati Āṅgirasa
IX.40	____	____
IX.41	____	Medhyātithi Kāṇva
IX.42	____	____
IX.43	____	____
IX.44	____	Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
IX.45	____	____
IX.46	____	____
IX.47	____	Kavi Bhārgava
IX.48	____	____
IX.49	____	____
IX.50	____	Ucathya Āṅgirasa
IX.51	____	____
IX.52	____	____
IX.53	____	Avatsāra Kāśyapa
IX.54	____	____
IX.55	____	____
IX.56	____	____
IX.57	____	____

IX.58	Soma Pavamāna	Avatsāra Kāśyapa
IX.59	____	____
IX.60	____	____
IX.61	____	Amahīya Āṅgirasa
IX.62	____	Jamadagni Bhārgava
IX.63	____	Nidhruvi Kāśyapa
IX.64	____	Kaśyapa Mārīca
IX.65	____	Bhṛgu Vāruṇi or Jamadagni Bhārgava
IX.66	Soma Pavamāna (1–18, 22–30), Agni (19–21)	One hundred Vaikhānasa poets
IX.67	Soma Pavamāna (1–9, 13–22, 28–30), Soma Pavamāna or Pūṣan (10–12), Agni (23, 24), Agni or Savitar (25), Agni or Agni and Savitar (26), Agni or the All Gods (27), Praise of the Student of the Pavamānī Verses (31–32)	Bharadvāja (1–3), Kaśyapa (4–6,) Gotama (7–9), Atri (10–12), Viśvāmitra (13–15), Jamadagni (16–18), Vasiṣṭha (19–21), Pavitra Āṅgirasa or Vasiṣṭha or both (22–32)
IX.68	Soma Pavamāna	Vatsaprī Bhālandana
IX.69	____	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
IX.70	____	Reṇu Vaiśvāmitra
IX.71	____	Ṛṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
IX.72	____	Harimanta Āṅgirasa
IX.73	____	Pavitra Āṅgirasa
IX.74	____	Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
IX.75	____	Kavi Bhārgava
IX.76	____	____
IX.77	____	____
IX.78	____	____
IX.79	____	____
IX.80	____	Vasu Bhāradvāja
IX.81	____	____
IX.82	____	____
IX.83	____	Pavitra Āṅgirasa
IX.84	____	Prajāpati Vācya
IX.85	____	Vena Bhārgava
IX.86	____	Akṛṣṭās, the Māṣā seer-group (1–10), Siktatās, the Nivāvarī seer-group (11–20), Pṛśnis, the Ajā seer-group (21–30), Atris (31–40), Atri Bhauma (41–45), Gṛtsamada (46–48)
IX.87	____	Uśanas Kāvya
IX.88	____	____
IX.89	____	____
IX.90	____	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
IX.91	____	Kaśyapa Mārīca
IX.92	____	____
IX.93	____	Nodhas Gautama
IX.94	____	Kaṇva Ghaura
IX.95	____	Praskaṇva Kāṇva
IX.96	____	Pratardana Daivodāsi
IX.97	____	Vasiṣṭha (1–3), Indrapramati Vāsiṣṭha (4–6), Vṛṣagaṇa Vāsiṣṭha (7–9), Manyu Vāsiṣṭha (10–12), Upamanyu Vāsiṣṭha (13–15), Vyāghrapād Vāsiṣṭha (16–18), Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (19–21), Karṇaśrut Vāsiṣṭha (22–24), Mṛḷīka Vāsiṣṭha (25–27), Vasukra Vāsiṣṭha (28–30), Parāśara Śāktya (31–44), Kutsa Āṅgirasa (45–58)
IX.98	Soma Pavamāna	Ambarīṣa Vārṣāgira and Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
IX.99	____	Two sons of Rebha, the Kāśyapas
IX.100	____	____
IX.101	____	Andhīgu Śyāvāśvi (1–3), Yayāti Nāhuṣa (4–6), Nahuṣa Mānava (7–9), Manu Sāṃvaraṇa (10–12), Prajāpati (13–16)
IX.102	____	Trita Āptya
IX.103	____	Dvita Āptya
IX.104	____	Parvata Kāṇva and Nārada Kāṇva, or the two Apsarases named Śikhaṇḍinī, daughters of Kaśyapa
IX.105	____	Parvata and Nārada
IX.106	____	Agni Cākṣuṣa (1–3), Cakṣus Mānava (4–6), Manu Āpsava (7–9), Agni Cākṣuṣa (10–14)
IX.107	____	Seven Seers
IX.108	____	Gaurivīti Śāktya (1–2), Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (3, 14–16), Ūru Āṅgirasa (4–5), Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja (6–7), Ūrdhvasadman Āṅgirasa (8–9), Kṛtayaśas Āṅgirasa (10–11), Ṛṇamcaya (12–13)
IX.109	____	Dhiṣṇya Fires, descendants of Iśvara
IX.110	____	Tryaruṇa and Trasadasyu
IX.111	____	Anānata Pārucchepi
IX.112	____	Śiśu Āṅgirasa
IX.113	____	Kaśyapa Mārīca
IX.114	____	____

Maṇḍala X

X.1	Agni	Trita Āptya
X.2	____	____
X.3	____	____
X.4	____	____
X.5	____	____
X.6	____	____
X.7	____	____
X.8	Agni (1–6), Indra (7–9)	Triśiras Tvāṣṭra
X.9	Waters	Triśiras Tvāṣṭra or Sindhudvīpa Āmbarīṣa
X.10	Yama and Yamī	Yama Vaivasvata (2, 4, 8–10, 12, 14), Yamī Vaivasvatī (1, 3, 5–7, 11, 13)
X.11	Agni	Havirdhāna Āṅgi
X.12	____	____

X.13	Soma Carts	Havirdhāna Āṅgi or Vivasvant Āditya
X.14	Yama (1–5, 13–16), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (6), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ or the Pitars (7–9), the Two Dogs, Offspring of Saramā (10–12)	Yama Vaivasvata
X.15	Pitars	Śaṅkha Yāmāyana
X.16	Agni	Damana Yāmāyana
X.17	Saraṇyū (1–2), Pūṣan (3–6), Sarasvatī (7–9), the Waters (10, 14), the Waters or Soma (11–13)	Devaśravas Yāmāyana
X.18	Death (1–4), Dhātar (5), Tvaṣṭar (6) Pitṛmedhas (7–13), Pitṛmedha or Prajāpati (14)	Saṃkusuka Yāmāyana
X.19	Waters or Cows (1ab, 2–7), Agni and Soma (1cd)	Mathita Yāmāyana or Bhṛgu Vāruṇi or Cyavana Bhārgava
X.20	Agni	Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prajāpātya or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
X.21	———	———
X.22	Indra	———
X.23	———	———
X.24	Indra (1–3), Aśvins (4–6)	———
X.25	Soma	———
X.26	Pūṣan	———
X.27	Indra	Vasukra Aindra
X.28	Wife of Vasukra (1), Indra (2, 6, 8, 10, 12), Vasukra (3–5, 7, 9, 11)	———
X.29	Indra	———
X.30	Waters or Apām Napāt	Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
X.31	All Gods	———
X.32	Indra	———
X.33	Lament of a Singer: All Gods (1), Indra (2–3), Dānastuti of Kuruśravana Trāsadasyava (4–5), Upamaśravas Mitrātithiputra (6–9)	———
X.34	Gambler	Kavaṣa Ailūṣa or Akṣa Maujavant
X.35	All Gods	Luśa Dhānāka
X.36	———	———
X.37	Sūrya	Abhitapas Saurya
X.38	Indra	Indra Muṣkavant
X.39	Aśvins	Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī
X.40	———	———
X.41	———	Suhastya Ghauṣeya
X.42	Indra	Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
X.43	———	———
X.44	———	———
X.45	Agni	Vatsaprī Bhālandana
X.46	———	———
X.47	Indra	Saptagu Āṅgirasa
X.48	Indra Vaikuṇṭha	Indra Vaikuṇṭha
X.49	———	———
X.50	———	———
X.51	Dialogue between Agni and the Gods	Agni Saucīka
X.52	Address to the Gods from Agni	———
X.53	Agni	———

X.54	Indra	Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
X.55	Indra [or All Gods?]	———
X.56	All Gods	———
X.57	———	Bandhu, Subandhu, Śrutabandhu, and Viprabandhu, the four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas
X.58	Return of Mind	———
X.59	Nirṛti (1–3), Nirṛti and Soma (4), Asunīti (5–6), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (7), Heaven and Earth (8–10) or Indra (10ab)	———
X.60	Asamāti (1–4, 6), Indra (5), Spell to Heal Subandhu (7–11), Praise of the Hand (12)	Four Gaupāyanas (1–5, 7–9), their mother (6)
X.61	All Gods	Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava
X.62	———	———
X.63	———	Gaya Plāta
X.64	———	———
X.65	———	Vasukarṇa Vāsukra
X.66	———	———
X.67	Bṛhaspati	Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
X.68	———	———
X.69	Agni	Sumitra Vādhryaśva
X.70	Āprī	———
X.71	Wisdom	Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa
X.72	Gods	Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, Bṛhaspati Laukya, or Aditi Dākṣāyaṇī
X.73	Indra	Gaurivīti Śāktya
X.74	———	———
X.75	Rivers	Sindhukṣit Praiyamedha
X.76	Pressing Stones	The snake Jaratkarṇa Airāvata
X.77	Maruts	Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava
X.78	———	———
X.79	Agni	Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara or Sapti Vājambhara
X.80	———	Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara
X.81	Viśvakarman	Viśvakarman Bhauvana
X.82	———	———
X.83	Battle Fury	Manyu Tāpasa
X.84	———	———
X.85	Wedding	Sūryā Sāvitrī
X.86	Vṛṣākapi (Conversation of Vṛṣākapi Aindra, Indrāṇī, and Indra)	Indra (1, 8, 11–12, 14, 19–22), Indrāṇī (2–6, 9–10, 15–18), Vṛṣākapi Aindra (7, 13, 23)
X.87	Agni Rakṣohan	Pāyu Bhāradvāja
X.88	Sūrya and Vaiśvānara	Mūrdhanvant Āṅgirasa or Vāmadevya
X.89	Indra	Reṇu Vaiśvāmitra
X.90	Puruṣa	Nārāyaṇa
X.91	Agni	Aruṇa Vaitahavya
X.92	All Gods	Śāryāta Mānava
X.93	———	Tānva Pārtha
X.94	Pressing Stones	The snake Arbuda Kādraveya
X.95	Purūravas and Urvaśī	Purūravas Aiḷa (1, 3, 6, 8–10, 12, 14, 17), Urvaśī (2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18)
X.96	Praise of Indra's Horses	Baru Āṅgirasa or Sarvahari Aindra
X.97	Plants	Bhiṣaj Ātharvaṇa

X.98	Devāpi's Plea for Rain	Devāpi Ārṣṭiṣeṇa
X.99	Indra	Vamra Vaikhānasa
X.100	All Gods	Duvasyu Vāndana
X.101	Priests	Budha Saumya
X.102	Race of Mudgala and Mudgalānī	Mudgala Bhārmyaśva
X.103	Indra (1–3, 5–11), Bṛhaspati (4), Āpva (12), Indra or the Maruts (13)	Apratiratha Aindra
X.104	Indra	Aṣṭaka Vaiśvāmitra
X.105	____	Durmitra/Sumitra Kautsa
X.106	Aśvins	Bhūtāṃśa Kāśyapa
X.107	Dakṣiṇā (Priestly Gift) or Its Givers	Divya Āṅgirasa or Dakṣiṇā Prājāpatyā
X.108	Saramā and the Paṇis	Paṇis (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), Saramā (2, 4, 6, 8, 10–11)
X.109	All Gods	Juhū Brahmajayā or Ūrdhvanābhan Brāhma
X.110	Āprī	Jamadagni Bhārgava or Rāma Jāmadagnya
X.111	Indra	Aṣṭrādaṃṣṭra Vairūpa
X.112	____	Nabhaḥprebhedana Vairūpa
X.113	____	Śataprabhedana Vairūpa
X.114	All Gods	Sadhri Vairūpa or Gharma Tāpasa
X.115	Agni	Upastuta Vārṣṭihavya
X.116	Indra	Agniyuta (or Agniyūpa) Sthaura
X.117	Praise of Generosity	Bhikṣu Āṅgirasa
X.118	Agni Rakṣohan	Urukṣaya Āmahīyava
X.119	Self-Praise of the "Lapwing"	Laba Aindra
X.120	Indra	Bṛhaddiva Ātharvaṇa
X.121	Ka "Who?"	Hiraṇyagarbha Prājāpatya
X.122	Agni	Citramahas Vāsiṣṭha
X.123	Vena	Vena Bhārgava
X.124	Agni (1–4), as mentioned (5–8), Indra (9)	Agni (2–4), Agni, Varuṇa, and Soma (1, 5–9)
X.125	Speech	Vāc Āmbhṛṇa
X.126	All Gods	Kulmalabarhiṣa Śailūṣi or Aṃhomuc Vāmadevya
X.127	Night	Kuśika Saubhara or Rātri Bhāradvājī
X.128	All Gods	Vihavya Āṅgirasa
X.129	Creation	Prajāpati Parameṣṭhin
X.130	Creation of the Sacrifice	Yajña Prājapatya
X.131	Indra (1–3, 6–7), Aśvins (4–5)	Sukīrti Kākṣīvata
X.132	Mitra and Varuṇa	Śākapūta Nārmedha
X.133	Indra	Sudās Paijavana
X.134	____	Māndhātar Yauvanāśva (1–6ab), Godhā (6cdef-7)
X.135	Yama	Kumāra Yāmāyana
X.136	Muni [the Keśins, "Long-Haired Ones"]	Vātaraśana's seven sons, the munis Jūti (1), Vātajūti (2), Viprajūti (2), Vṛṣāṇaka (4), Karikrata (5), Etaśa (6), Ṛśyaśṛṅga (7)
X.137	All Gods	Bharadvāja (1), Kaśyapa (2), Gotama (3), Atri (4), Viśvāmitra (5), Jamadagni (6), Vasiṣṭha (7)
X.138	Indra	Aṅga Aurava
X.139	Sūrya (1–3), Viśvāvasu (4–6)	Viśvāsu Devagandharva
X.140	Agni	Agni Pāvaka
X.141	All Gods	Agni Tāpasa
X.142	Agni	The four Śārṅgas: Jaritar (1–2), Droṇa (3–4), Sāriṣṛkva (5–6), Stambamitra (7–8)
X.143	Aśvins	Atri Sāṃkhya

X.144	Indra	Suparṇa Tārkṣyaputra or Ūrdhvakṛśana Yāmāyana
X.145	Against Cowives	Indrāṇī
X.146	Lady of the Wilderness (Araṇyānī)	Devamuni Airammada
X.147	Indra	Suvedas Śairīṣi
X.148	____	Pṛthu Vainya
X.149	Savitar	Arcat Hairaṇyastūpa
X.150	Agni	Mṛḷīka Vāsiṣṭha
X.151	Śraddhā	Śraddhā Kāmāyanī
X.152	Indra	Śāsa Bhāradvāja
X.153	____	Devajāmaya Indramātaraḥ
X.154	To a Dead Man	Yamī
X.155	Spell to Remove Misfortune (1, 4), Brahmaṇaspati (2–3), All Gods (5)	Śirimbiṭha Bhāradvāja
X.156	Agni	Ketu Āgneya
X.157	All Gods	Bhuvana Āptya or Sādhana Bhauvana
X.158	Sūrya	Cakṣus Saurya
X.159	Against Cowives	Śacī Paulomī
X.160	Indra	Purāṇa Vaiśvāmitra
X.161	Against Diseases	Yakṣmanāśana Prājāpatya
X.162	Against Miscarriage	Rakṣohan Brāhma
X.163	Against Disease	Vivṛhan Kāśyapa
X.164	Against Nightmare	Pracetas Āṅgirasa
X.165	All Gods (Bird of Ill Omen)	Kapota Nairṛta
X.166	Against Rivals	Ṛṣabha Vairāja or Ṛṣabha Śākvara
X.167	Indra (1–2, 4), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (3)	Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni
X.168	Vāyu	Anila Vātāyana
X.169	Cows	Śabara Kākṣīvata
X.170	Sūrya	Vibhrāj Saurya
X.171	Indra	Iṭa Bhārgava
X.172	Dawn	Saṃvarta Āṅgirasa
X.173	Praise of the King (Royal Consecration)	Dhruva Āṅgirasa
X.174	Praise of the King	Abhīvarta Āṅgirasa
X.175	Pressing Stones	Ūrdhvagrāvan Āṅgirasa
X.176	Ṛbhus (1), Agni (2–4)	Sūnu Ārbhava
X.177	Pataṃga	Pataṃga Prājāpatya
X.178	Tārkṣya	Ariṣṭanemi Tārkṣya
X.179	Indra	Śibi Auśīnara (1), Pratardana Daivodāsi (2), Vasumanas Rauhidaśva (3)
X.180	____	Jaya Aindri
X.181	All Gods	Pratha Vāsiṣṭha (1), Sapratha Bhāradvāja (2), Gharma Saurya (3)
X.182	Bṛhaspati	Tapurmūrdhan Bārhaspatya
X.183	For the Birth of a Son [Sacrificer (1), the Sacrificer's Wife (2), and the Hotar (3)]	Prajāvant Prājāpatya
X.184	Pregnancy/Birth Charm [Liṅgoktadevatāḥ]	Tvaṣṭar Garbhakartar or Viṣṇu Prājāpatya
X.185	Aditi	Satyadhṛti Vāruṇi
X.186	Vāyu	Ula Vātāyana
X.187	Agni	Vatsa Āgneya
X.188	Agni Jātavedas	Śyena Āgneya
X.189	Sārparājñī or Sūrya	Sārparājñī
X.190	Bhavāvṛttam	Aghamarṣaṇa Mādhuchandasa
X.191	Agni (1), Unity (2–4)	Saṃvanana Āṅgirasa